MASSACRE ARC

1

Higurashi

WHEN THEY CRY

STORY BY
RYUKISHI07

ART BY
HINASE MOMOYAMA

Higurashi
WHEN THEY CRY
MASSACRE ARC

Higurashi WHEN THEY CRY MASSACRE ARC 1

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—A CERTAIN DAY IN JUNE 1983...

...HINAMIZAWA—

WHO IS IT?

ZUSHU CASTLE

WHO
—!!?

...THAT
KILLS
ME...?

WHO
ON
EARTH
IS IT...

CHAPTER 1: FREDERICA

Higurashi

WHEN THEY CRY

MASSACRE ARC

FU
(FLIK)

POU
(GLOW)

WHERE...

...AM I?

.....?

IS THAT... ME!?

BUT...

...BUT I'M RIGHT HERE, ALIVE.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

... IN THE END ...

BA (FWP)

WHO'S THERE?

I WAS MURDERED ...?

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT!?

SU (SSK)

OH, CALM DOWN.

...EVEN IN THE "ATONEMENT ARC" WORLD, IN JUNE OF 1983...

...RIKA FURUDE WAS MURDERED ...

IT'S BECAUSE OF IT THAT WE ARE ABLE TO MEET.

...YOU'RE ME?

NO.

I AM FREDERICA BERN-KASTEL.

...ËH?

I AM A DIFFERENT PERSON THAN RIKA FURUDE.

A DIF-FERENT PERSON ?

BUT...

HMM.

...BUT YOU'RE RIGHT...

...SHE LOOKS SO MUCH LIKE ME.

.....
...EH?

WHAT?

YOU ONLY JUST DIED, SO YOU WOULDN'T REMEMBER YET.

BUT YOU SHOULD BE VAGUELY AWARE OF WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT.

WHAT IS SHE GOING ON ABOUT...?

YES...

POUUU (GLOOOW)

...YOU AND I ARE ABLE TO WATCH THE EVENTS UNFOLD FROM THE OUTSIDE.

...IS THAT AS THE TALE OF HINAMIZAWA REPEATS ITSELF AGAIN AND AGAIN...

.....

IT MIGHT BE BETTER TO CALL ME A "DIFFERENT PERSONALITY."

SOME CALL ME "WITCH."

BUT MY NAME ISN'T IMPORTANT.

WHAT IS IMPORTANT...

...THAT'S RIGHT.

I... KNEW THIS.

...HAVE BEEN REPEATING OVER AND OVER.

THE LIVES AND DEATHS OF RIKA FURUDE...

UUU (GLOW)

AND EVERY TIME, I AM MURDERED!!

FOR MORE THAN A HUNDRED YEARS, MY LIFE HAS REPEATED MORE TIMES THAN I CAN COUNT.

THE STAGE IS SET IN HINAMIZAWA...

...ALSO KNOWN AS OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE.

...SOMEONE DIES AS PART OF A SERIES OF MYSTERIOUS DEATHS...

HERE IN JUNE EVERY YEAR, ON THE NIGHT OF THE COTTON DRIFTING— THE FESTIVAL HONORING THE VILLAGE'S GUARDIAN DEITY, OYASHIRO-SAMA...

THE THIRD YEAR, THE PRIEST AT FURUDE SHRINE—MY FATHER—WHO TOOK A NEUTRAL ATTITUDE TOWARD THE DAM, DIED OF A MYSTERIOUS ILLNESS...

...AND MY MOTHER DROWNED HERSELF.

IN THE FIRST YEAR, JUNE 1979...

THE NEXT YEAR, SATOKO'S MOTHER AND STEPFATHER, WHO HAD SUPPORTED THE DAM PROJECT, FELL TO THEIR DEATHS WHILE VACATIONING.

...THE DIRECTOR OF THE DAM CONSTRUCTION WAS CUT INTO PIECES.

...AND HER BROTHER, SATOSHI, DISAPPEARED MYSTERIOUSLY A FEW DAYS LATER.

THEN, IN THE FOURTH YEAR, SATOKO'S AUNT WAS BEATEN TO DEATH ...

AND IN JUNE OF 1983...

IT HAP-PENED AGAIN THIS TIME.

GYU (CLENCH)

I COULDN'T MAKE IT TO THE FUTURE BEYOND JUNE 1983...

SO...

...IN THE FIFTH YEAR, ON THIS NIGHT...

...OR A FEW DAYS AFTERWARD, I AM MURDERED. EVERY TIME...

...YES.

...THIS FRAGMENT WAS ANOTHER DUD.

THOSE ARE THE CRYSTALLIZED FRAGMENTS OF THOSE POSSIBILITIES...

THIS IS A WORLD OF INFINITE POSSIBILITIES WITH ME AT ITS CENTER...

KUSU (CHUCKLE)

くす

I SEE YOU REMEMBER NOW.

THAT'S RIGHT. AND THESE ARE ALL THE WORLDS THAT YOU HAVE SEEN.

...FOR EXAM-PLE.

I THINK OF THESE FRAGMENTS AS SOME-THING LIKE A SERIES OF BOOKS.

SO I'VE NAMED THEM ALL.

THAT IS THE "COTTON DRIFTING ARC."

THIS IS THE "ABDUCTED BY DEMONS ARC."

AND THIS IS THE "CURSE KILLING ARC."

EH?

...STOP.

DON'T SHOW ME THAT!

I DON'T EVER WANT TO SEE IT AGAIN!

SU (SSK)

?

...OH, I'M SORRY.

YOU ALWAYS HAVE LOATHED THE ONES WHERE YOUR BEST FRIEND GETS WORN OUT LIKE AN OLD RAG.

...ANY-WAY.

THESE FRAGMENTS— THESE WORLDS THAT HAVE REPEATED FOR ETERNITY WITHIN THEIR CLOSED SPHERES...

...YOU'VE SEEN THEM ALL FIRSTHAND, YES?

...WILL NEVER FIGURE OUT THAT THEIR WORLDS ARE REPEATING.

AND THE HUMANS INSIDE THEM...

BUT YOU AND I EXIST OUTSIDE THOSE SPHERES.

SO WE UNDER-STAND.

WHAT'S REALLY IMPORTANT ...

...BUT THAT IS JUST A PREREQUISITE.

KUSU (CHUCKLE)

...IS WHAT GOVERNS THESE SPHERES—

THE THREE RULES.

...HOW CAN YOU ASK THAT?

DO YOU KNOW WHAT THEY ARE?

OF COURSE I DO.

WHEN I STACK ALL THE FRAGMENTS OF THE STORIES I'VE SEEN ON TOP OF EACH OTHER, THE RULES ARE OBVIOUS.

TAKE THE "ABDUCTED BY DEMONS ARC," FOR EXAMPLE.

...IF YOU ONLY LOOK AT THIS FRAGMENT, YOU MAY ASSUME...

...THAT KEIICHI IS A VERY SUSPICIOUS PERSON, EASILY DRIVEN TO NEUROSES.

BUT...

IN THIS WORLD, KEIICHI MAEBARA WAS POSSESSED WITH A PARANOID SUSPICION OF HIS FRIENDS...

...AND BEAT RENA RYUGU AND MION SONOZAKI TO DEATH.

...IN THE OTHER WORLDS, KEIICHI DOESN'T SHOW ANY INDICATIONS OF THAT KIND OF MENTALITY.

IN FACT, HE'S PASSIONATE, STRAIGHT-FORWARD, AND CAPABLE OF PUSH-ING HIMSELF TO THE LIMIT TO HELP HIS FRIENDS.

INDEED.

...CAN KNOW THAT HIS MELTDOWN IN THE "ABDUCTED BY DEMONS ARC" IS ACTUALLY THE EXCEPTION, RATHER THAN THE RULE.

BY LOOKING AT THE OTHER FRAGMENTS, WE ON THE OUTSIDE...

THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT FACT.

. IN OTHER WORDS ...

...WHEN LOOKING AT MULTIPLE WORLD FRAGMENTS, THE FACTS SHARED IN COMMON BY ALL OF THEM...

...ARE THE ONES CLOSEST TO THE TRUTH.

ISN'T THAT RIGHT?

KOKU (NOD)

AND LOOKING AT IT THAT WAY, WE CAN DEDUCE THE RULES.

YES.

AS I SAID BEFORE, IN THE "ABDUCTED BY DEMONS ARC," KEIICHI WAS CONSUMED BY PARANOID SUSPICION.

HE DIDN'T REALIZE THAT RENA AND MION ONLY HID THE SERIES OF MYSTERIOUS DEATHS FROM HIM BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T WANT TO SCARE HIM. IT WAS OUT OF CONSIDER-ATION.

INSTEAD, HE ASSUMED HIS FRIENDS WERE SOMEHOW INVOLVED IN THE MURDERS.

ONE WAS SIMILARLY POSSESSED IN THE "COTTON DRIFTING ARC" AND THE "EYE OPENING ARC"...

...MION SONOZAKI'S TWIN SISTER SHION.

HER BELOVED SATOSHI HOJO DISAPPEARED IN 1982.

HER DESIRE FOR REVENGE TOOK ON A LIFE OF ITS OWN...

...AND SHE TOOK SEVERAL LIVES.

AND THEN ...

...IN THE "ATONEMENT ARC," RENA RYUGU WAS THE ONE POSSESSED.

SHE BECAME SUSPICIOUS OF THE SONOZAKI FAMILY, WHO HATED THE HOJOS AND CONSIDERED THEM TO BE THE VILLAGE'S SWORN ENEMIES.

UNABLE TO ESCAPE THE MISFORTUNE THAT CONSTANTLY PLAGUED HER FAMILY, SHE KILLED TWO YAKUZA THUGS WHO WERE USING HER FATHER.

THEN AN INCIDENT LED HER TO SUSPECT THE SONOZAKIS WERE BEHIND OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE...

...AND IN HER APPEAL TO THE POLICE, SHE TOOK ALL OF HER CLASSMATES HOSTAGE, HOLDING THEM CAPTIVE IN THE SCHOOL BUILDING.

THE WHO, WHY, AND HOW ARE ALWAYS DIFFERENT.

BUT IN EVERY WORLD, SOMEONE IS OVERCOME WITH FEAR AND SUSPICION, WHICH LEADS THEM TO ACTS OF VIOLENCE.

AND THAT LEADS US TO THE FIRST RULE.

IN OTHER WORDS, "AN UNSPECIFIED PERSON IN HINAMIZAWA IS POSSESSED BY PARANOIA ...

...WHICH LEADS THEM TO MURDER." THAT IS RULE X!

...
NEXT.

AN EVENT THAT REPEATS MORE SPECIFICALLY IN EACH WORLD.

ON THE NIGHT OF THE COTTON DRIFTING, JIROU TOMITAKE AND MIYO TAKANO ARE KILLED. THAT IS ANOTHER RULE.

IT IS ABSOLUTE DESTINY.

THIS HAPPENS IN EVERY FRAGMENT WITHOUT EXCEPTION.

UNLIKE THE UNSTABLE RULE X, BY WHICH A RANDOM PERSON IS LED TO MURDER...

...UNDER RULE Y, THE MODUS OPERANDI AND EVERYTHING ALONG WITH IT REMAINS UNCHANGED.

...HOW-EVER...

KUSU (CHUCKLE)

...THESE TWO PEOPLE ARE KILLED BY A STRONG AND ABSOLUTE WILL.

REGARD-LESS OF WHO GOES MAD UNDER RULE X...

THAT IS RULE Y.

KUSU

KUSU

KUSU CHUCKLE)

...THESE TWO RULES EXIST COMPLETELY INDEPENDENT OF ONE ANOTHER, AND YET...

...THE MAIN PLAYER IN EACH TRAGEDY, WHO IS DRIVEN TO VIOLENCE UNDER RULE X...

...ALWAYS ASSOCIATES THE DEATHS OF TOMITAKE AND TAKANO WITH SOME IMMINENT DANGER TO HIM- OR HERSELF.

"TOMITAKE AND TAKANO WERE KILLED. I MAY BE IN DANGER TOO"...

...HE OR SHE ALWAYS ASSUMES.

...THAT'S BECAUSE THEY...

...BE-CAUSE KURAUDO OOISHI AND MIYO TAKANO ALWAYS ...

OOISHI FIRMLY BELIEVES THAT THE SONOZAKI FAMILY IS BEHIND THE MURDERS!!

...AND IN THE "ABDUCTED BY DEMONS ARC" AND THE "EYE OPENING ARC," HE SPURS ON THE PARANOIA FOR KEIICHI MAEBARA AND SHION SONOZAKI!

JUST LIKE MIYO TAKANO SENT RENA RYUGU ON HER RAMPAGE IN THE "ATONEMENT ARC"!!

...TRY TO TIE THE TWO RULES TOGETHER ...!

GU GRIP

IF NOT FOR THESE TWO...

...MY DEAR FRIENDS WOULD NEVER HAVE COMMITTED SUCH TERRIBLE CRIMES...!

GU

GU

GU

I CAN'T SAY THAT I LIKE OOISHI OR TAKANO EITHER.

IN FACT, I ABHOR THEM.

SU (SSK)

!

BUT SURELY YOU REALIZE THAT THEY'RE NOT THE ONLY ONES TO BLAME?

.....

I KNOW THAT!

BA (FWAP.

...THERE'S ONE MORE RULE GOVERNING THEIR ACTIONS.

THAT'S RIGHT.

AND THAT IS THE FINAL RULE.

"ALL OF THE MURDERS IN HINAMIZAWA ARE COMMITTED BY THE SONOZAKI FAMILY"...

EVERYONE BELIEVES THAT, AND THAT BELIEF IS RULE Z!!

KURU (SPIN)

クルッ

BUT...

THE SONOZAKI FAMILY HAS ALWAYS BEHAVED AS IF THEY ARE LURKING IN THE SHADOWS, MANIPULATING ALL OF THE MURDERS.

WE KNOW THAT OOISHI AND TAKANO BELIEVE IT TO BE TRUE, AND SO DO ALL OF THE OTHER VILLAGERS.

AND THAT...

...CASTS A SHADOW OF DOUBT OVER THE SERIES OF MYSTERIOUS DEATHS THAT OCCUR IN HINAMIZAWA EVERY YEAR ON THE NIGHT OF THE COTTON DRIFTING.

...THAT'S RIGHT.

...AS SHION SONOZAKI UNCOVERED IN THE "EYE OPENING ARC"...

...THAT'S JUST AN ACT PUT ON BY THE SONOZAKI FAMILY.

IT'S NO MORE THAN A BLUFF...

BECAUSE OF RULE 2, EVERYONE ASSUMES THAT THE DEATHS ARE A SERIES OF MURDERS COMMITTED BY THE SONOZAKI FAMILY.

BUT THEY MIGHT BE UNIQUE INCIDENTS THAT ALL JUST HAPPENED TO OCCUR ON THE NIGHT OF THE COTTON DRIFTING.

THESE THREE SIMPLE RULES ARE CONSTANTLY PREVENTING MY FRIENDS... FROM FINDING HAPPINESS...

STILL, EVERYONE STARTS TO THINK THAT THEY'RE CONNECTED, AND THAT'S WHAT FEEDS THE PARANOIA...

...WHICH THEN TRIGGERS MORE VIOLENCE !!

SAY.

DON'T YOU THINK THIS WORLD IS FASCINATING?

KUSU

KUSU (CHUCKLE)

KUSU

A MERE THREE RULES COMBINE SO SIMPLY...

...TO CREATE A KALEIDOSCOPE OF DIFFERING SCENARIOS, ALL SET ON THE STAGE OF HINAMIZAWA.

THERE IS ONE FINAL TRUTH THAT CAN BE FOUND BY COMBINING ALL THE WORLD FRAGMENTS.

AND THAT IS...

GU (CLENCH)

...FASCINATING?

...THAT I AM MURDERED EVERY SINGLE TIME!! AND YOU CALL THAT FASCINATING!?

...I'M SORRY.

FOR-GIVE ME.

I CAN'T DO ANY-THING BUT STAY HERE WATCHING ALL THESE FRAGMENTS. I DON'T HAVE MUCH TO LOOK FORWARD TO.

THAT A STRONG AND ABSOLUTE WILL DEMANDS OUR BLOOD IS SOMETHING WE SHARE IN COMMON.

I TOO AM KILLED IN JUNE OF 1983 EVERY TIME WITHOUT FAIL.

...TOMITAKE AND TAKANO ARE KILLED ON THE NIGHT OF THE COTTON DRIFTING EVERY TIME WITHOUT FAIL.

SO MY DEATH IS MOST LIKELY A PART OF RULE Y...

THAT IS WHY I AM NEVER ABLE TO MAKE IT PAST JUNE OF 1983...

...AND WHY I'M STUCK IN THIS DEAD-END WORLD...

WHY DO I HAVE TO BE KILLED AGAIN AND AGAIN BY THAT STRONG WILL?

WHY MUST MY FUTURE BE TAKEN FROM ME?

BECAUSE OUR TIME IS ALWAYS TURNED BACK AFTER WE ARE KILLED.

NEITHER YOU NOR I HAS ANY IDEA WHAT HAPPENS AFTER RIKA FURUDE IS KILLED.

...IF YOU KNEW WHAT HAPPENED AFTER YOU WERE MURDERED, YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO FIND THE ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION.

...BUT...

...JUST AS SHE WAS KILLED BY SHION SONOZAKI, WHO WAS DRIVEN TO MADNESS IN THE "COTTON DRIFTING ARC" AND "EYE OPENING ARC."

...IN SOME WORLDS, SHE IS KILLED BY THE MAIN PLAYER IN THE TRAGEDY, AS PART OF RULE X...

...WHILE RIKA FURUDE IS ALMOST ALWAYS KILLED BY RULE Y...

...WE HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING WHAT THAT CHANGE MIGHT BE.

WELL...

...EVEN IF BEING KILLED BY A DIFFERENT RULE ALTERS THE STORY AFTER YOUR DEATH...

BUT I'VE ALMOST RUN OUT OF CHANCES...!

NO...

BUT ...

...I WANT TO KNOW THE TRUTH!

AS HAS HANYU'S POWER TO TURN BACK TIME...

INDEED. AFTER YOUR LONG JOURNEY THROUGH TIME, YOUR MIND HAS ALMOST REACHED THE END OF ITS LIFE SPAN.

I WANT TO MAKE IT PAST JUNE 1983...

...AND HAVE A HAPPY FUTURE WITH MY FRIENDS !!!

.....

MOYAAA (HAAAZE)

IT'S ALMOST TIME...

... OH.

HEY.

WE'VE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO UNDO THE LOCKS ON RULES X, Y, AND Z.

AAA (HAAAAZE)

SO THE CHANCE THAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO BREAK THE RULES IN THE NEXT WORLD IS INFINITELY SMALL...

.....!

EVEN SO...!

THIS TIME, I HAVE TO DEFEAT DESTINY!

...I HAVE TO FIND OUT...!

I HAVE TO FIND OUT WHO KILLED US!!!

I wished to know the world outside the well:
So I crawled up from the bottom of the well.

I wished to know the world outside the well.
So I climbed on, no matter how many times I slipped
and fell hard on my back.

But I realized.
The more I climb, the farther I fall, and the
more it hurts.

When my interest in the outside world
matched the pain in my whole body,
I finally understood the words of the Frog Prince.

Frederica Bernkastel

CHAPTER 2: IN THE MOUNTAINS

BRIGHT
...

KA
(FLASH)

.....

...NN.

MIIIN (BUZZZZ)

MIN

MIN

MIN

...

SASU (RUB)

...OH, I SEE.

MY TIME'S BEEN TURNED BACK.

—AT THE SCHOOL...

THAT MEANS I DIED AGAIN ...

GIRI (GRIP)

THEN SHE SET A TIME BOMB. EVERYONE HAD LOST HOPE...

DRIVEN TO MADNESS, RENA BARRICADED HERSELF IN THE SCHOOL AND DOUSED THE BUILDING IN GASOLINE.

I CAN TELL.

RIGHT NOW, RENA'S GOING THROUGH THE SAME THING I WENT THROUGH THEN!!

GIRI (GRIT)

KEIICHI REMEMBERED WHAT HAPPENED IN ANOTHER WORLD— SOMETHING THAT ONLY I SHOULD REMEMBER.

AND ...

.....

...EH?

...KEIICHI FREED RENA.

HE FREED HER FROM THE MAD-NESS!!

... AND THEN ...

...A RAY OF LIGHT.

...FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THIS DARK, INESCAPABLE LABYRINTH, I SAW...

SO I THOUGHT THAT THIS TIME...

...THIS TIME, MAYBE SOMETHING WOULD BE DIFFERENT.

...I WENT TO THE CLINIC FOR A CHECK-UP.

...BUT AFTER RENA SURRENDERED TO THE POLICE...

AND ON MY WAY HOME...

BA
DAB
...IT'S NO USE.

WHY DID I LOSE MY LIFE?

I HAVE TO PREVENT IT THIS TIME!

I CAN'T REMEMBER A THING...

THE MEMORIES OF WHEN I WAS KILLED ARE TOO FUZZY.

HEY.

HITA (STEP)

I KNOW YOU'RE THERE. ANSWER ME...

WHAT DAY OF WHAT MONTH IS IT TODAY?

UHH
...

HANYU.

あ！

ozu
(FIDGET)

ず

あ
UHH, UHH...
あう
あう...
UM... UM...
IT'S JUNE OF 1983.
...I THINK...
...THE COTTON DRIFTING FESTIVAL IS IN TWO WEEKS, SIR.
!!?
SO...
...SO I DON'T HAVE EVEN A MONTH TO LIVE !?
UHH, UHH...

NO...

.....
...FOR A LONG...

...A TIME TOO LONG TO REMEMBER...

...LONG TIME— OVER A HUNDRED YEARS...

...HANYU AND I HAVE REPEATED MY LIFE OVER AND OVER AGAIN.

...HANYU HAS BEEN WITH ME SINCE THE MOMENT I WAS BORN INTO THIS WORLD.

SHE HAS BEEN HERE WITH ME MUCH LONGER THAN EVEN MY PARENTS.

OGYAA (WAAAH)

OGYAA

SO (TOUCH)

?!

I AM THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN SEE HER.

SHE IS NOT HU-MAN.

AND...

...EVERY TIME I DIE, HANYU'S MYSTERIOUS POWER...

...HAS ALLOWED ME TO RELIVE MY LIFE AGAIN, KEEPING ALL THE MEMORIES OF MY PREVIOUS LIVES.

.....
...BUT.

RIKA.

...HA-NYU...

IT'S USELESS TO GET YOUR HOPES UP ANY MORE, SIR.

...AND...

GYUU (CLENCH)

...RES-IGNATION IS TAKING HOLD OF HANYU'S HEART.

...WITH THE FATIGUE OF OUR LONG, LONG JOUR-NEY...

AS A RESULT OF SEEING SO MANY WORLDS THAT BREED NOTHING BUT TRAGEDY ...

...THE PICK OF DESPAIR IS CHIP-PING AWAY AT MY HEART.

ALL THE HOPE AND COURAGE I ONCE HAD HAVE TURNED TO DUST AND VANISHED.

...OF MINE.

AND ...

...HANYU'S POWER, WHICH ONCE TURNED BACK YEARS OF TIME, HAS WASTED AWAY.

NOW SHE CAN ONLY BRING ME BACK TO TWO WEEKS BEFORE THE COTTON DRIFTING FESTIVAL...

THIS MAY BE THE LAST TIME THAT YOU CAN TURN BACK TIME.

RIKAAAA!

...RI—

ZAZA (RUSTLE)

TA (TMP)

TA

TA

BA (BAM)

OHH!

RIKA-CHAN! YOU DIDN'T SPRAIN ANYTHING?

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT!?

WHERE DOES IT HURT? THIS OLD MAN'LL FIX IT RIGHT UP!

.....

...EH?

...AH.

UHH!

YOU WERE PLAYING WITH YOUR FRIENDS...

...AND ACCIDENTALLY FELL OFF A CLIFF.

THAT'S WHERE YOU'RE STARTING FROM THIS TIME, SIR.

I SEE ...

SO THAT'S WHY MY LEG HAS BEEN HURTING.

SASU (RUB)

RIKA...?

MEW!

NIPAAA (BEEEAM)

IT'S JUST A LITTLE SPRAIN, SIR!

STILL ... ...MION-SAN, DO YOU HAVE A COMPRESS?

EH HEH.

I DON'T HAPPEN TO HAVE ONE ON HAND.

BUT I'LL FEEL SO SORRY FOR POOR WITTLE RIKA-CHAN IF WE DON'T FIX HER UP.

I WILL.

THEY'RE ALL SUCH GOOD PEOPLE.

IT'S TOO BAD THEY CAN'T SEE ME.

NOR-MALLY ...

...AND MION TURNS EVERYTHING INTO A PRODUCTION, MAKING EVERYTHING A CONTEST.

...RENA GOES CRAZY WHEN SHE SEES ANYTHING "ADOWABLE"...

...SATOKO LOVES PLAYING PRACTICAL JOKES...

...I KNOW THAT THEY THINK OF ME AS ONE OF THEM.

THEY ALL HAVE KIND HEARTS AND TRULY CARE FOR ME.

BUT AFTER SPENDING SO MANY SUMMERS WITH THEM...

YES...

I WANT TO LIVE—BEYOND THIS SUMMER AND ON AND ON—WITH THE PEOPLE THAT I LOVE!!

EVERY TIME, EITHER SOME UNKNOWN WILL...

...OR ONE OF MY FRIENDS, CONSUMED WITH MADNESS...

BUT.

AND THAT IS WHAT HANYU AND I HAVE FOUGHT FOR THROUGH THIS LONG JOURNEY.

THAT IS MY ONE WISH.

...EVERY TIME, THE PATH...

...IS CUT SHORT.

SU (SSK)

MEW! SEE? I'M ALL RIGHT.

AH.

IT'S NOT FAR. I CAN WALK HOME, SIR.

RIKA ...

WE DON'T WANT YOU TO PUSH YOURSELF...

...RIKA-CHAN.

FU (FLIT)

EH?

I'LL TAKE YOU TO SEE COACH IRIE.

WE'LL MAKE SURE YOU GET THAT LOOKED AT.

NI (SMILE)

!!?

ZA (SHIFF)

SORRY IT TOOK ME SO LONG TO GET HERE. I'M NOT USED TO THE MOUN-TAINS.

BUT AT TIMES LIKE THIS, HE CAN BE QUITE THE GENTLE-MAN.

USUALLY KEIICHI IS INCREDIBLY INSENSI-TIVE AND TACTLESS.

MEW.

SETTLE DOWN, RENA! RIKA-CHAN'S INJURED!

WAAH!!

ISA (DODGE)

R-R-R—

RIKA-CHAN, YOU'RE SO ADOW-ABLE IN HIS ARMS LIKE THAT!

I'M TAKING YOU HOME WITH ME!!

NO.

GUI (SQUEEZE)

I CAN WALK, SIR.

K...

KEIICHI, YOU'RE MAKING A BIG DEAL OUT OF NOTHING.

CALM DOWN, RENA-SAN!!

IT MIGHT BE NOTHING NOW, BUT IF YOU PUSH YOURSELF, YOU COULD MAKE IT WORSE.

JUST LET ME TAKE CARE OF YOU!

...KEIICHI...

HE...

...IN THE WORLD I WAS JUST IN...

...HE STOOD UP TO HER.

...WHEN RENA WAS BEATING MION...

...AND...

...HE DID EVERYTHING HE COULD TO SAVE RENA.

LOOKING AT THE REGULAR, EVERYDAY KEIICHI, IT'S IM-POSSIBLE TO IMAGINE...

...SUCH STRENGTH AND DEPEND-ABILITY.

JUST AS RENA RISKED HER LIFE IN HER EFFORT TO SAVE KEIICHI WHEN HE WENT INSANE MANY WORLDS AGO...

...HE WAS ABLE TO RISK HIS LIFE FOR HIS FRIENDS TOO...

——!

IN THE LAST WORLD, KEIICHI MANAGED TO ACCESS HIS MEMORIES OF OTHER WORLDS!!

...THAT'S RIGHT.

BUT HE DID IT!

AND HE MADE A MIRACLE HAPPEN. OVER THE COURSE OF OUR LONG JOURNEY, WE'D NEVER SEEN A MIRACLE LIKE IT.

IF HE CAN TRULY UNDER-STAND ME...

...I COULDN'T ASK FOR A BETTER ALLY!!!

...IF HE STILL HAS THOSE MEMO-RIES IN THIS WORLD...

NO.

IT'S NOT A MATTER OF "IF."

...KEI-ICHI.

HMM?

KEIICHI BROUGHT ABOUT A MIRACLE.

WHAT'S UP, RIKA-CHAN?

I'M SURE HE REMEMBERS THIS TIME TOO!!!

...RIKA?

DO YOU REMEMBER, KEIICHI, SIR?

...UH.

RE-MEMBER WHAT?

KYOTON (BLINK)

HE REMEM-BERS.

HE KNOWS. HE HAS TO.

DON'T YOU REMEMBER?

WHEN YOU WENT UP ON THE ROOF!

KEIICHI'S DONE IT BEFORE.

.....

PLEASE, REMEMBER!

YOU KNOW.

YOU FOUGHT THERE FOR ALL OF US, KEIICHI, SIR.

OU (SQUEEZE)

...AH.

HE REMEMBERS !!

RIKA-CHAN...

BA (FWP)

KEI-ICHI!

I'M SORRY.

I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.

SLI
(SLIP)

.....

...RIKA?

OH.

I GUESS...

...IT'S NO USE AFTER ALL...

...RIKA? ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

YOU DIDN'T HIT YOUR HEAD, DID YOU?

SU (SSK)

KEIICHI-SAN FIGHTING ON THE ROOF? THAT'S SILLY.

WHAT?

IS THIS A DREAM YOU HAD, RIKA-CHAN?

KEIICHI WOULD BE SO COOL FIGHTING. HE WOULD!

.....
...MEW.

GU (SQUEEZE)

H-HEY, RIKA-CHAN.

SUTO (THMP)

.....

NIPA (BEAM)

ニパッ☆

THANK YOU, KEIICHI.

I'M OKAY NOW, SIR.

...YOU CAN'T EXPECT HIM TO REMEMBER.

IF CREATING A MIRACLE WERE THAT SIMPLE...

...NEITHER OF US WOULD BE SUFFERING LIKE THIS.

IT'S POSSIBLE ...

...THAT THE MIRACLE WILL NEVER HAPPEN AGAIN. KEIICHI MAY NEVER REMEMBER THE OTHER WORLDS AGAIN.

...YOU'RE RIGHT.

A MIRACLE THAT COULD NEVER HAPPEN TWICE.

...LIKE ROLLING SIXES TEN TIMES IN A ROW DURING A BOARD GAME.

THAT WOULD BE...

...THERE'S NOTHING HANYU CAN DO.

KANA

KANA

KANA

KANA (CHIRP)

KANA

KANA

IN THAT CASE...

I'VE BEEN TRYING FOR MORE THAN A HUNDRED YEARS, AND I'VE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO BREAK DOWN THIS WALL.

WHAT CAN I POSSIBLY DO IN LESS THAN A MONTH...!?

...I WILL BE MURDERED !!!

...ONCE AGAIN...

RIKA-CHAN!?

...AND SO...

RIKA

RIKA

IN THE NEXT TWO WEEKS...

KANA

KANA

KANA

KANA (CHIRP?

KANA

KANA

KANA

KANA

WE ARE DESTINED TO FADE AWAY AT THE END OF THE FESTIVAL, JUST LIKE THE SUMMER CICADAS.

WE SHOULD PREPARE FOR THE WORST, RIKA.

KANA

KANA

KANA

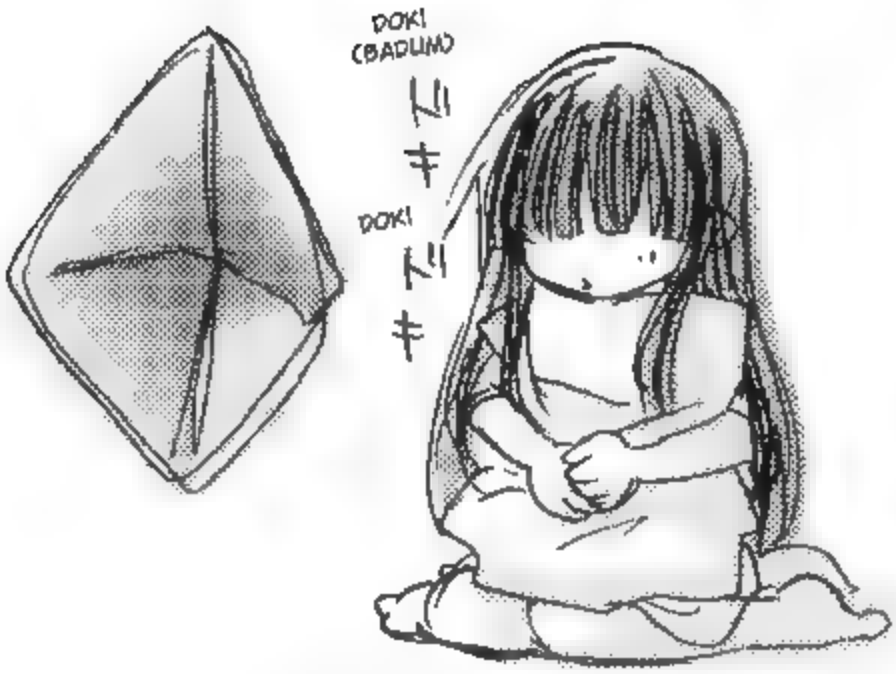
...BEGAN IN DESPAIR.

...RIKA FURUDE'S TALE...

KANA (CHIRP)

KANA

KANA



Watching the fragment

...RIKA FURUDE IS KILLED TIME AND TIME AGAIN.

IN JUNE OF 1983 ...

DESPITE ALL MY EFFORTS, I COULD NOT CHANGE MY FATAL DESTINY.

WITH THAT WISH AND HANYU'S MYSTERIOUS POWER, I REPEATED THE EVENT CONTINUALLY FOR MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED YEARS.

NEXT TIME... NEXT TIME.

...AT THIS RATE...

MY HEART IS RULED BY DEEP DESPAIR.

AND NOW, I AM LEFT WITH LESS THAN A MONTH.

...I'M GOING TO BE KILLED AGAIN!

CHAPTER 3: THE POWER TO CHANGE DESTINY

入江診療所

SIGN: IRIE CLINIC

SU (SSK)

NNNGH

...THERE.

ALL DONE.

PETA (STICK)

SATOKO-CHAN?

DON'T RUB THE INJECTION SITE, OKAY?

WELL, SATOKO-CHAN.

SHALL WE DO OUR REGULAR QUIZ?

GACHA (KACHAK)

AH HA HA.

KUSU (CHUCKLE)

KUSU

YOU'RE A GOOD GIRL, SATOKO, SIR.

NADE

NADE (PET)

LEAVE ME ALONE! IT'S JUST A SHOT!

THEN JUST ANSWER WITH "I DON'T KNOW."

KUSU

KUSU

I DON'T LIKE YOUR QUIZZES, TAKANO-SAN.

FU (APPEAR)

UHH...

I HOPE SATOKO IS OKAY.

PATAN (SHUT)

WE COME TO IRIE CLINIC EVERY SUNDAY...

.....

...OH, RIGHT.

...BECAUSE OF A CERTAIN ILLNESS OF SATOKO'S.

I LOOK FORWARD TO IT!

BUT SATOKO...

...DOESN'T KNOW ABOUT IT.

OH! WHAT ANIMAL IS IT?

WOULD YOU BE SO KIND AS TO NAME MY STUFFED ANIMAL?

KII (CREAK)

DON'T WORRY. I GOT GOOD RESULTS TODAY.

HOW IS SHE DOING, IRIE?

PHEW..

.....

EVEN IF WE WERE TO COMPLETELY REMOVE THE FOREIGN SUBSTANCE ...

...IT WOULD MAKE HER BODY PRONE TO EXTREME REAC-TIONS.

SO THE FACT REMAINS THAT SHE IS IN CRITICAL CONDITION.

STILL...

...THE DISEASE MAY BE IN REMISSION, BUT IT'S AT LEVEL THREE.

...SO AT LEVEL THREE, IT CAN NEVER BE CURED, SIR...?

SHE'LL HAVE TO LIVE WITH THE ILLNESS...

...HER WHOLE LIFE.

...THAT'S ABOUT THE SUM OF IT.

AND OF COURSE, I HAVE NO INTENTION OF GIVING UP ON HER.

TAKE DIABETES, FOR EXAMPLE.

THERE ARE MORE THAN A FEW CASES IN THE WORLD OF PEOPLE LEARNING TO LIVE WITH INCURABLE DISEASES.

BUT DON'T BE DISCOUR-AGED.

I WILL RID HER OF THIS DISEASE.

WHAT-EVER THE COST.

...I BELIEVE IN YOU, SIR.

IRIE ...

You have a call from Tokyo.

AND ...

GACHA (CLICK)

HELLO ?

TURURURU (BRRRING)

...WILL DO EVERYTHING IN HIS POWER TO HELP SATOKO. I'VE SEEN IT IN SEVERAL WORLDS.

...I KNOW HE TRULY HAS HER BEST INTERESTS AT HEART...

OH, RISA-SAN. IS IT THAT TIME ALREADY?

SU (SSK)

NOW HERE'S THE LAST ONE.

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

THAT IS HOW SATOKO ...

UM ...

UH.

LIKE TWO BUTTERFLIES ON TOP OF EACH OTHER ...?

...IS ABLE TO BE HERE NOW.

...YOU'RE DOING WELL, SO WE'LL GO BACK TO TWO INJECTIONS A DAY.

ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT, I KNOW!

"YOU'LL BE HELPING IRIE WITH HIS THESIS.

BUT THIS IS PART OF MY JOB, SO I JUST HAVE TO DEAL WITH IT.

W-WELL, I HATE THAT THEY'RE A NUISANCE.

WHY SHOULD I HAVE TO GO THROUGH ALL THOSE EXAMS JUST FOR NUTRITIONAL RESEARCH?

HONESTLY.

SHAAA (SHHH)

YOU DON'T LIKE THE EXAMS, SIR?

BUT...

...WHAT'S THE POINT?

...BECAUSE WE CAN'T LET SATOKO KNOW ABOUT HER DISEASE...

THAT'S WHAT WE'VE TOLD SATOKO.

"AND IN EXCHANGE, HE'LL PROVIDE YOUR LIVING EXPENSES."

THIS WORLD IS GOING TO END...

...IN TWO WEEKS ANYWAY.

YOU'RE LATE!

...OH.

THE DAY I'VE REPEATED SO MANY TIMES...

...HAS COME.

HEY THERE!

GOOD MORNING, RIKA-CHAN, SATOKO!

ゲーム大会 興宮店

SIGN: GAME TOURNAMENT / OKINOMIYA STORE

ザワ

ザワ

ザワ

ザワ

ザワ

(MURMUR)

HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I PARTICI-PATED IN THIS TOURNA-MENT?

UGH...

SO MANY ADOW-ABLE THINGS!

HAVE YOU HEARD, RIKA?

HE LETS US HAVE TOURNA-MENTS EVERY SO OFTEN AS A WAY TO ATTRACT CUSTOMERS.

THE MANAGER HERE IS A GOOD FRIEND OF MINE.

DON'T TELL ME THIS IS WHERE WE'RE HAVING OUR CLUB ACTIVITY!

THE PRIZE FOR TODAY'S TOURNA-MENT IS FIFTY THOUSAND YEN!!

I REMEM-BER.

MION DONATED FIFTY THOUSAND YEN OUT OF HER OWN POCKET FOR THE PRIZE MONEY.

...RIKA?

AREN'T YOU SURPRISED?

IT... IT'S FIFTY THOUSAND YEN.

WH-WH-WHY WOULD WE BUY THAT MUCH SOY SAUCE?

NIPAAA (BEEEAM)
にぱー

WITH FIFTY THOUSAND YEN, WE CAN BUY MORE SOY SAUCE THAN WE COULD EVER USE, SIR.

OH NO!!

...RIKA FURUDE WOULD HAVE BEEN REALLY SHOCKED BY SUCH A LARGE SUM.

BUT I ALREADY KNEW...

...SO I CAN'T BE SURPRISED.

...I ENVY THEM.

YOU WON'T BEAT ME!

NOW, WHAT KIND OF GAMES ARE WE GONNA PLAY?

ZLKIN CSTING

I CAN'T SINCERELY ENJOY THIS LIKE THEY CAN ANY-MORE.

IT'S LIKE WATCHING THE SAME VIDEO OVER AND OVER.

EVERY TIME YOU WATCH IT, YOU'RE LESS SUR-PRISED BY WHAT HAP-PENS...

...LESS MOVED.

YOU LOSE ALL THE EMOTIONS CON-NECTED TO IT...

ALL RIGHT!

YOUR ATTENTION, PLEASE!

AND OF COURSE, I KNOW EXACTLY HOW THIS TOURNA-MENT IS GOING TO GO.

FIRST, YOU'LL PICK A NUMBER FROM THIS BOX THAT WILL ASSIGN YOU TO ONE OF FIVE TABLES.

JAN (TA-DAA!)

EACH TABLE WILL PLAY THE GAME ASSIGNED TO IT UNTIL ONE WINNER IS DECIDED.

WE'LL ALL DRAW A NUMBER AND GO SIT AT ONE OF FIVE TABLES.

BUT THIS TOURNA-MENT IS DIFFERENT.

WHAT GAME WILL WE PLAY!?

OKAY!

EVERY DAY, MION CHOOSES THE ACTIVITY FOR CLUB BASED ON A WHIM.

AND THAT'S WHY, NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES I EXPERIENCE THIS WORLD, I NEVER GET TIRED OF CLUB ACTIVITIES—

BECAUSE WE RARELY DO THE SAME THING TWICE.

A LOCKER TO AN-OTHER DIMEN-SION!?

DOSA (THUD)

...AND EVERY TIME WE DO IT, IT'S THE SAME.

AND BECAUSE OF THAT, THE RANDOMNESS OF THE WHIM DOESN'T FACTOR IN...

MION PROBABLY THOUGHT LONG AND HARD BEFORE SHE DECIDED WHAT TO DO FOR THE TOURNA-MENT.

THIS IS HOW A STRONG WILL CREATES DESTINY.

...RIKA.

JUST AS SOMEONE'S WILL TO KILL RIKA FURUDE IN JUNE OF 1983...

...CREATES MY DESTINY TO DIE.

YOU CAN'T FIGHT DESTINY, SIR.

DESTINY IS LIKE THE FLOW OF A RIVER.

HANYU...

IF YOU HOPE FOR A MIRACLE THAT WILL CHANGE YOUR DESTINY ...

...YOU WILL ONLY BE DISAP-POINTED.

THE TRICK TO SWIMMING WELL...

...IS NOT TO WASTE YOUR ENERGY GOING AGAINST THE CURRENT, SIR.

I'M NOT HOPING FOR ANYTHING ANYMORE.

EH?

...HA-NYU. IT'S OKAY.

I KNOW.

...YES.

THAT'S RIGHT, SIR.

IF YOU GET YOUR HOPES UP, YOU'LL ONLY BE HURT WHEN THEY COME CRASHING DOWN.

IT'S BETTER TO ACCEPT THE DESTINY YOU CAN'T FIGHT AGAINST.

OF COURSE, THAT MEANS I'M SUPPOSED TO JUST LIE DOWN AND DIE!!

WHAT'S WRONG, RIKA-CHAN?

ARE YOU BORED?

HYOI (FWOOP)

I HAVE TO ACT LIKE RIKA FURUDE— EXCITED OVER DOING EVERY-THING FOR THE FIRST TIME.

I'M SUP-POSED TO BE CARE-FUL.

UH... UM.

I DID IT AGAIN...

HA (GASP)

AH...

...!!

HUH? IS IT?

...I CAN'T STOP MYSELF FROM AN-SWER-ING AS MYSELF.

I WAS JUST NOTICING THAT IT'S THE SAME AS THE LAST TIME WE DID THIS.

AND YET ...

BUT HEY, YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN NEXT.

WE'RE CHOOSING NUMBERS FROM A BOX.

AND WE WON'T DECIDE WHAT GAMES TO PLAY UNTIL AFTER WE TALK TO THE MANAGER.

NO, I DO KNOW.

WELL, IT'S TRUE THAT NOTHING'S MORE PAINFUL THAN HAVING TO SIT THROUGH AN EXPLANATION YOU'VE ALREADY HEARD.

EH?

...THE CLUB MEMBERS WILL ALL BE PERFECTLY DIVIDED AMONG THE TABLES, SIR.

SU (SS)

YOU, KEIICHI, WILL SIT OVER THERE AND PLAY THE MILLIONAIRE GAME.

I'LL BE AT THE TABLE NEXT TO YOURS AND PLAY A FISHING GAME, SIR.

HEH!

WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN? YOU PREDICTING THE FUTURE?

KEI-CHAN, RIKA-CHAN! PULL YOUR NUMBERS!

WHOOPS, SORRY.

PREDICTING THE FUTURE? INDEED!

ALLLL RIGHT, THE TABLES ARE DECIDED!

ZAWA

ZAWA (MURMUR)

OHH! NOW THAT'S SOME-THING!

EACH OF THE CLUB MEMBERS ENDED UP AT A DIFFERENT TABLE!

.....

SEE...? I TOLD YOU.

MION DOESN'T WANT ANY OF THE CLUB MEMBERS TO FACE EACH OTHER IN THE FIRST ROUND.

SO EVERY TIME, SHE PULLS SOME KIND OF TRICK TO AVOID IT.

NIPA (BEAM)

にぱ。

MY PROPHECIES ALWAYS COME TRUE, KEIICHI, SIR.

HA-HA. YOU'RE KIDDING.

BUT HEY, WE STILL DON'T KNOW WHAT GAMES WE'RE GONNA PLAY.

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT GAMES THE MANAGER'S GONNA BRING US...

SU (SHIP)

SORRY TO KEEP YOU!

FOR THIS TABLE, LET'S HAVE A FISHING GAME.

KOTO (CLUNK)

AND FOR YOU...

SU

...EH?

BAN (BAM)

THE MILLION-AIRE GAME!

...!!

.....

THE MANAGER BRINGS OUT GAMES HE CAN'T SELL, HOPING TO GET THE LOSERS TO BUY THEM.

SO DESTINY HAS ALREADY DECIDED WHICH GAMES HE'LL BRING US.

...IT'S ALL JUST LIKE YOU SAID...

IT'S JUST LIKE...

...EVERY OTHER TIME I'VE SEEN IT.

HEY, RIKA-CHAN.

IS IT TRUE?

I HEARD FROM THE OLDER PEOPLE IN THE VILLAGE THAT YOU'RE THE REINCARNATION OF OYASHIRO-SAMA...

...AND YOU CAN SEE THE FUTURE OR SOMETHING.

IT'S... REPEATING AGAIN...

I ONLY READ WHAT'S BEEN WRITTEN BY DESTINY, SIR.

AND...

IT'S ALWAYS THE SAME.

IT REALLY NEVER CHANGES.

...JUST LIKE EVERY TIME, I'M DESTINED TO BE KILLED!!!

...
HEH.

!?

AH HA HA HA!

FIKKURI SHOCK

...MEW?

DON'T GET SO COCKY, RIKA-CHAN.

NIII (SMIRK)

YOU CAN "READ DESTINY"? GIVE ME A BREAK. DON'T GIVE ME THAT CRAP.

TO A MAN, WORDS LIKE "FATE" AND "DESTINY" HAVE A MUCH MORE SACRED AND PASSIONATE SIGNIFICANCE.

IT'S NOT SOMETHING YOU CAN JUST READ.

WHAT THE HECK?

YOU SAID IT'S MY DESTINY TO PLAY THE MILLIONAIRE GAME!?

WELL, I'M GONNA TAKE THAT DESTINY AND TEAR IT TO SHREDS!!

TOKUN (THUMP)

...AND YET, MY HEART IS POUNDING ...!!

TOKUN

GA (GRAB)

UWAH!

WH-WHAT ARE YOU DOING, MAEBARA-SAN?

SORRY, GUYS.

BUT... THERE'S NO WAY HE CAN DO THAT... AND I JUST DECIDED NOT TO GET MY HOPES UP... AND YET...

I HAVE THIS GAME AT HOME.

SO I KNOW EVERY RULE, EVERY POSSIBLE TRICK!

EHHH?

REALLY?

HISO (PSST)

HISO

...THAT'S TRUE...

HISO

YES. SO IT WOULDN'T BE FAIR FOR US TO PLAY THIS GAME.

...THIS?

MANAGER! I'M SORRY!

BUT COULD WE PLAY A DIFFERENT GAME, PLEASE?

OH, OKAY. HOW ABOUT...

THEN IT'S SETTLED. WE'LL PLAY THIS ONE.

YEAH. THE RULES ARE SIMPLE.

POP-UP PIRATE! THAT SOUNDS GREAT!

KURU (WHIRL)

NIKA (GRIN)

HOW'S THAT, RIKA-CHAN!?

...BUT ...

DOKUN

AND YET...

THAT'S HOW IT WAS BEFORE.

DOKUN

KEIICHI'S TABLE PLAYED THE MILLIONAIRE GAME.

...IT WAS ALL DESTINED.

DOKUN (THUMP)

...HE BROKE THROUGH IT LIKE IT WAS TISSUE PAPER !!!

DOKUN (THUMP)

SFX: KOSO (WHISPER)

HEY, RIKA-CHAN.

YOU LOOKED REALLY BORED BACK THERE.

KEIICHI DOESN'T HAVE ANY SPECIAL POWERS...

...BUT IT DIDN'T EVEN TAKE HIM FIVE MINUTES...

YOU WERE REALLY HOPING NOT TO PLAY THE FISHING GAME, BUT YOU ENDED UP WITH IT ANYWAY SO YOU WERE UPSET, RIGHT?

THAT'S RIGHT. THERE'S NO POINT HIDING IT NOW.

WELL, THAT'S SIMPLE!

PON (PAT)

!

HEH HEH!

JUST CHANGE DESTINY YOUR-SELF!

...HAVE EXPONENTIALLY MORE MIRACULOUS POWER THAN KEIICHI DOES.

STOP FIGHTING DESTINY IF YOU DON'T WANT TO GET HURT?

THE TRICK IS TO FIND THE CURRENT AND NOT WASTE ENERGY SWIMMING AGAINST IT?

SO WHY WAS I WHINING LIKE THAT?

I...

THAT'S RIDICULOUS...!!!

...I CAN FIGHT TOO...!

YOU TWO.

WHAT'S WRONG, RIKA-CHAN?

DOKI (BADUM)

KYU (CLENCH)

DOKI

I'VE NEVER SAID ANYTHING LIKE THIS BEFORE.

HOW WILL THEY RE-SPOND?

DOKI

DOKI

RIKA-CHAN...

SO I WANT TO PLAY A DIFFERENT GAME, SIRS!

ニーはー

NIPAAA (BEEEAM)

I FEEL SO BAD FOR THE FISHIES.

AH...

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO PLAY, RIKA-CHAN?

LET'S PLAY A DIFFERENT GAME!

OKAY!

PAAAA (BEEEAM)

BUT...

...NOT ANY-MORE !!

...THAT'S RIGHT.

A LONG, LONG TIME AGO, I FOUGHT MUCH MORE AGGRES-SIVELY.

BUT EVEN-TUALLY I GOT TIRED AND JADED.

I GAVE IN TO MY ENEMY— I GAVE IN TO DESTINY.

.....

LET'S ALL DECIDE TOGETH-ER.

HEY! MION!

WAIT UP!

...IN THE END, MION HAD TO LEAVE FOR WORK IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FESTIVITIES, AND CLUB ACTIVITIES WERE CANCELED.

WHAT!?

SORRY, KEI-CHAN! I HAVE WORK! ☆

RIGHT WHEN THINGS WERE GETTING GOOD TOO. WHAT ROTTEN LUCK, HUH?

BUT I GOT A CALL FROM MY UNCLE. HE SAYS HE NEEDS SOME-BODY TO WORK THE CASH REGISTER.

OH... WELL, IF YOU GOTTA WORK, YOU GOTTA WORK.

BUT WE'LL FIND ANOTHER CHANCE TO REALLY GO AT IT.

GA (BUMP)

カツ

YEAH! OF COURSE WE WILL!

OHH!

THEY REALLY ARE SUCH GOOD FRIENDS.

RENA'S JEALOUS!

BUT CAN YOU BEAT THIS OLD MAN?

AH HA HA

I WON'T LET ANY-ONE TAKE VICTORY FROM ME!

HMMM, BUT MII-CHAN IS STILL A GIRL, YOU KNOW.

BARAN (JANGLE)

NO KIDDING. WHEN I SEE THEM LIKE THAT, THEY LOOK LIKE A COUPLE OF DUDES WITH A THRIVING BROMANCE.

THANKS FOR YOUR HELP TODAY, KIDS!

THE EVENT WAS A HUGE SUCCESS!

ODOOOH!!

HERE'S YOUR REWARD!

SO THAT MEANS MINE IS ANOTHER...

GOSO (RUMMAGE)

NOTHING FOR RELATIVES!

BOOO!

DON'T I GET ONE?

KYA (SQUEAL)

FUWA (FLOAT)

OOOH!! かわいっ

IT'S ADOWABLE!

.....!

KYU (CLENCH)

あはは
AH-HA-HA!

ポン
PON (PAT)

BUT A DOLL? I DON'T KNOW.

IT'S CUTE, I'LL GIVE YOU THAT...

KEI-CHAN GOT THE ONE THAT SUITS HIM THE LEAST!

.....

DO YOU REMEMBER, SIR?

RIKA.

SU (SHHP)

OF COURSE I DO.

...YES.

'PER-VERT!'

'SHUT UP!'

...WHOM HE THINKS OF MORE AS ONE OF THE GUYS.

HE WAS TOO EMBARRASSED TO GIVE THE DOLL TO MION...

NNNGH...

THIS IS WHERE THE TACTLESS, INSENSITIVE KEIICHI...

...GIVES THE DOLL TO RENA.

AND IT HURTS HER FEELINGS.

...THE TRUTH IS, MION WANTS HIM TO TREAT HER LIKE A GIRL.

BUT ...

THAT'S WHEN THE DOOR TO THE TRAGEDY SLOWLY BEGINS TO OPEN.

...IS SUGGESTING TO KEIICHI THAT HE SHOULD GIVE THE DOLL TO MION.

NN?

IN THAT CASE...

...WHAT I NEED TO DO NOW...

...EH?

HE KNOWS WHAT?

I HAVEN'T SAID ANY-THING YET.

KURU (SPIN)

YEAH. I KNOW.

ZA (SKFF)

NI (SMIRK)

HERE.

!!!

KAAA (BLUSH)

ÄH!

わた わた
WATA
WATA (PANIC)
WHY... WH-WH-WH-WHY WOULD YOU GIVE IT TO M-M-ME!?
YOU SHOULD TOTALLY HAVE GIVEN IT TO RENA!!
A G-G-GIRLY THING LIKE THIS? FOR THIS OLD MAN? IT'S NOT ME AT ALL!
あた
ATA (FLUSTER)
おた
OTA (FLUSTER)
UH, IT IS?
THIS IS A GIFT TO MY BEST FRIEND AFTER OUR INTENSE SHOWDOWN IN CLUB TODAY.
LISTEN.
OH, COME ON. I'M NOT SO CLOSED MINDED THAT I CAN ONLY GIVE DOLLS TO GIRLS.
AND WHEN A GUY GIVES SOMETHING TO HIS FRIEND, THAT FRIEND BETTER TAKE GOOD CARE OF IT!
OF COURSE !!
UM
...I CAN HAVE IT EVEN IF I'M NOT A "GIRL"?
THEN ...

...JUST SO YOU KNOW, I'M ONLY ACCEPTING THIS TO SAVE YOU FROM EMBARRASSMENT, KEI-CHAN!

IT'S NOT 'COS I WANT IT, OKAY!?

...I CAN'T BELIEVE IT.

HOW COULD THIS POSSIBLY HAVE HAPPENED...?

MAYBE HE DOES REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE?

IT CAN'T BE.

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE, SIR.

...EVEN IF KEIICHI DOESN'T HAVE HIS MEMORIES FROM BEFORE...

...MAYBE THERE ARE LITTLE PIECES BUILDING UP IN HIS HEART, SO TINY THAT HE CAN'T DETECT THEM...

REALLY.

THEN WHY DO YOU THINK THIS HAPPENED?

HEH HEH.

UHH... WELL... UM...

...MAYBE...

UHH UHH...

...PIECES OF THE SERIES OF TRAGEDIES HE CAUSED IN PREVIOUS WORLDS.

HE MUST HAVE REGRETTED THOSE TRAGEDIES TO THE POINT OF INSANITY.

MAYBE THAT'S WHY...

...THE FEELING THAT HE SHOULD GIVE IT TO MION IS STRONGER THAN IT WAS THE LAST TIME THIS HAPPENED...

IT-IT ISN'T, OKAY!?

NOT 'COS YOU WANT IT, HUH? SUUURE.

UH-HUH.

(KUSU (CHUCKLE)

STILL, MION JUST CAN'T ADMIT HOW SHE FEELS, SIR.

BUT...

NOPE.

SEE YOU TOMORROW.

...SHE LOOKS VERY HAPPY.

TA (TMP)

I'M...

I'M LATE FOR WORK! I HAVE TO GO!

SEE YOU LATER!

...CAN'T BELIEVE IT.

I REALLY...

...I'VE EXPERIENCED THE SAME FEW WORLDS AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN...

MION-SAN IS SO STUB-BORN.

I THINK YOU GET A PERFECT SCORE TODAY, KEIICHI-KUN!

I THINK!

FUU (SIGH)

SHE FINALLY TOOK IT.

あは HA HA

はHA!

はHA!

はHA!

BUT THIS TIME, SOMETHING IS DIFFERENT.

YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT ME AREN'T YOU!?

HEY!

...YOU CAN CHANGE DESTINY IN JUST FIVE MINUTES.

IF YOU PUT YOUR MIND TO IT...

HEY, HANYU.

HA HA HA

UGH! YOU'LL RUE THIS DAY!

I THOUGHT YOU HAD TO GET TO WORK!

I FEEL IT.

SO IF WE HAVE TWO WHOLE WEEKS...

...THEN SURELY WE CAN CHANGE DESTINY THIS TIME!

...YES.

WE'LL DO OUR BEST, RIKA, SIR.

CHUN (CHIRP)

CHUN

I AM MURDERED WITHOUT FAIL IN JUNE OF 1983.

I HAD THOUGHT THAT WAS A DESTINY THAT COULD NOT BE CHANGED.

BUT YESTERDAY, KEIICHI TAUGHT ME HOW TO HAVE THE COURAGE TO BREAK FREE FROM DESTINY.

THEN KEIICHI GAVE THE DOLL TO MION...

...AND STOPPED THE TRAGEDY THAT WAS TO HAPPEN.

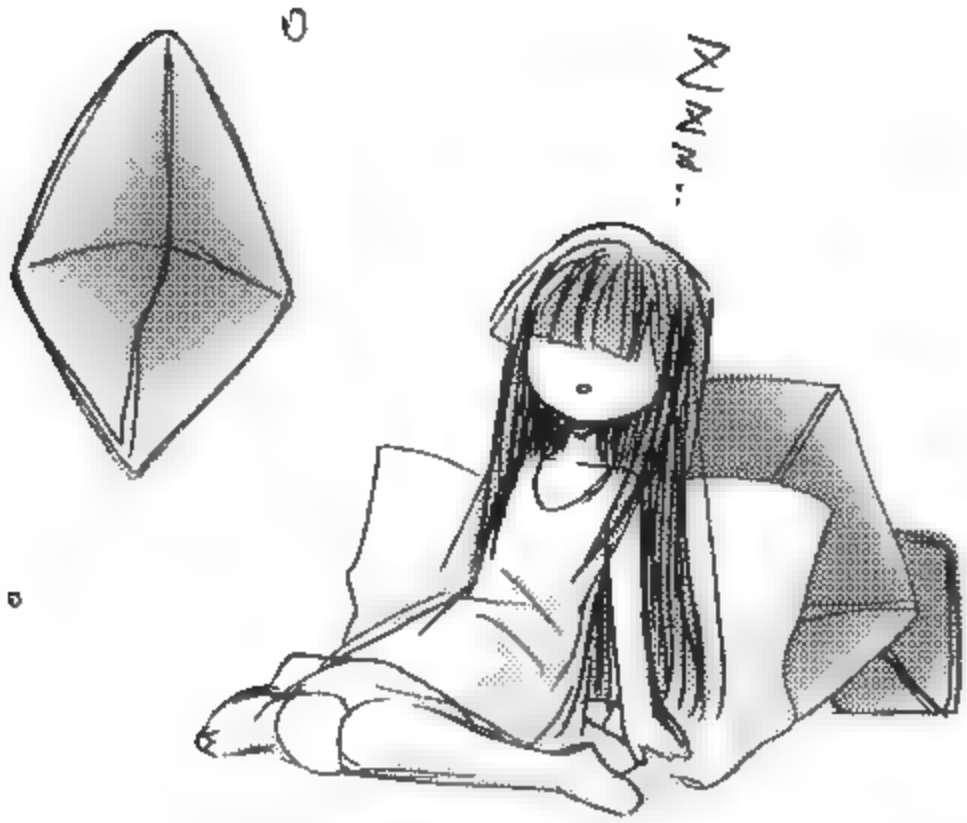
THAT WAS THE FIRST MIRACLE THAT TOOK PLACE IN THIS WORLD.

RIKA!

HURRY! LET'S GO!

THERE IS SOMETHING ABOUT THIS WORLD...

CHAPTER 4:
A WORLD OF GOOD FORTUNE



Napping while watching the fragment

I THINK THAT KEIICHI...

...WOULD MAKE THE BEST AUCTIONEER FOR THE REVERSE AUCTION, SIR!

NIPA (BEAM)

REVERSE AUCTION?

?

HUH.

THE COTTON DRIFTING IS THE VILLAGE FESTIVAL THAT IS ABOUT TO TAKE PLACE IN HINAMIZAWA.

YUP. IT'S GOING TO BE THE BIGGEST ATTRACTION AT THIS YEAR'S COTTON DRIFTING!

AFTER SEEING THE WAY KEIICHI WORKED THE CROWD AT THE GAME TOURNAMENT YESTERDAY, MION, AS A MEMBER OF THE FESTIVAL COMMITTEE...

HIYA!

...NOMINATED KEIICHI FOR AUCTIONEER.

FELLOW COMMITTEE MEMBER CHIE SECONDED THE MOTION.

...TO ASK KEIICHI IF HE'LL ACCEPT THE JOB.

AND NOW, THE PRINCIPAL AND ALL THE CLUB MEMBERS ARE HERE...

BUT I ONLY JUST MOVED TO HINAMIZAWA. ARE YOU SURE YOU WANNA LET A NEWBIE DO IT?

WE'RE ALL COUNTING ON YOU, KEIICHI-SAN!

MEW!

IF ANYONE CAN DO IT, YOU CAN, KEIICHI-KUN!

WE'RE TRUSTING YOU WITH THE JOB BECAUSE WE KNOW YOU, KEI-CHAN.

OH, THAT DOESN'T MATTER!

WHAT DO YOU SAY, MAEBARA-KUN?

.....

I'LL DO IT.

わあ!

YAY!

AND AS A MAN ...

...IF I'M GONNA DO IT, I'M GONNA DO IT RIGHT!

STILL, HAVE WE DONE A REVERSE AUCTION IN ANY OF THE PREVIOUS WORLDS I'VE SEEN?

LEAVE EVERY-THING TO ME!

THEN WE LOOK FORWARD TO IT, MAEBA-RA-KUN.

BUT WHEN I GOT TO SCHOOL TODAY, I REALIZED THAT IT'S EVEN MORE DIFFER-ENT THAN I THOUGHT.

YESTERDAY, I REALIZED THAT THIS WORLD IS DIFFERENT THAN ALL THE OTHERS.

BE-CAUSE ...

!

OHH, SATO-KO!

YOU HAVEN'T EATEN YOUR PUMPKIN!

...
SHION
...!

SHE'S BEHAVING MUCH DIFFER-ENTLY THAN SHE EVER HAS BEFORE.

YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO ORDER ME TO EAT, SHION-SAN, UNTIL YOU START EATING CANNED FOOD!

YOU SHOULDN'T BE PICKY!

ZOOOO!

DOTA

DOTA

DOTA

DOTA (STOMP)

SHION IS SUPPOSED TO BE ATTENDING SCHOOL IN OKINOMIYA.

BUN

NOW SAY AAH!

BUN (SHAKE)

WHY WOULD SHE BE HERE IN HINAM-IZAWA ...

...AND WHY IS SHE TAKING CARE OF SA-TOKO ...?

...THAT'S RIGHT.

AND WHEN SHION WAS OVERCOME WITH PARANOIA, SHE HATED SATOKO ENOUGH TO KILL HER.

SHION LOVED SATOKO'S BROTHER, SATOSHI.

GOOD GIRL

IF SOMETHING HAPPENS TO TRIGGER PARANOIA IN ONE OF THEM AND TO DRIVE THEM TO MURDER...

...THEN THIS HEARTWARMING SCENE WILL BE RUINED ALONG WITH EVERYTHING ELSE.

I WON'T LET THIS WORLD TURN OUT LIKE THAT!

BUT WHAT CAN I DO TO STOP IT?

GOOD FOR YOU, KEIICHI-KUN.

THERE'S NO PENALTY GAME FOR MESSING UP, AND YOU GET A REWARD IF YOU DO WELL.

YEAH. IF THE AUCTION'S A SUCCESS, I GET THREE YEARS OF ANGEL MORT DESSERT FESTIVAL TICKETS. THAT'S NOTHING TO SNEEZE AT.

... DESSERT ...?

AH! RIGHT! SPEAKING OF SWEETS...

GOSO (RUMMAGE)

DON (DUN!)

I HAVE A TREAT FROM MY BATCHA!

HERE, KEI-CHAN.

BATCHA JUST LOVES MAKING OHAGI.

OOOH! THERE ARE SO MANY OF THEM!

TH... THANKS.

.....?
KEIICHI IS ACTING STRANGELY...

KEIICHI.

WHAT'S THE MATTER, SIR?

...I... UH...

...I THINK THERE WAS A TIME BEFORE...

...WHEN MION AND RENA GAVE ME OHAGI...

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, KEI-CHAN?

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE BROUGHT OHAGI TO SCHOOL.

AND I'VE NEVER MADE OHAGI.

!!

?

.....

DOES KEIICHI HAVE SOME FAINT MEMORIES OF THAT EVENT ...?

IN A PREVIOUS WORLD, IT WAS MION AND RENA'S GIFT OF OHAGI THAT INTENSIFIED KEIICHI'S PARANOIA.

...RIKA-CHAN...?

AND WHERE AND HOW?

...WHEN DID THEY GIVE YOU OHAGI, SIR?

KEI-ICHI...

MION AND RENA CAME TO SEE ME AND BROUGHT THE OHAGI AS A GET-WELL GIFT.

...I WAS STAYING HOME FROM SCHOOL WITH A COLD.

... HMMM.

I THINK IT WAS PROBABLY A DREAM, BUT...

...AND THERE WAS SOMETHING INSIDE.

...AFTER THEY LEFT, I ATE THE OHAGI.

AND THEN ...

A SEWING NEEDLE ...!!

SO KEIICHI DOES REMEMBER ...!

...IT'S JUST, THERE WAS A SCENE LIKE THAT IN A MANGA I READ AS A KID.

SO WHEN I SEE SOMETHING ROUND AND PACKED TOGETHER, LIKE HAMBURGER OR A RICE BALL...

...I SOMETIMES GET NERVOUS AND WONDER IF THERE'S ANYTHING INSIDE IT...

THAT WOULD NEVER ACTUALLY HAPPEN!

AH!

HA (GASP)

BUT IT WAS JUST A DREAM !!

BUT OF COURSE, I TRY NOT TO WORRY ABOUT IT WHEN I'M TAKING FROM YOU GUYS' LUNCHES!

IT'D BE RUDE OF ME TO CHECK EVERYTHING YOU BROUGHT TO EAT.

UM... KEI-CHAN.

OH.

NO...

YOU HAVEN'T EATEN ANY.

YOU DON'T LIKE OHAGI?

.....

...THAT'S RIGHT.

I'LL BET HE'S JUST SUSPICIOUS THAT YOU PUT SOMETHING IN THEM, SINCE YOU'RE THE ONE WHO BROUGHT THEM, ONEE.

...EVEN IF HE ACKNOWL-EDGES THAT IT'S BECAUSE OF SOME TRAUMA CAUSED BY A MANGA...

...NO ONE CAN BLAME HIM FOR NOT BEING ABLE TO EAT OHAGI.

IF HE REMEMBERS THAT...

...EH!?

HAGU (CHOMP)

WH... WHY !?

I KNOW, RIGHT ?

OH! THIS IS REALLY GOOD!

WEREN'T YOU... WEREN'T YOU SCARED ?

...KEI-ICHI!

N...

...A SEWING NEEDLE IN THE OHAGI!?

WHAT IF THERE REALLY HAD BEEN ...

NEEDLE!?

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, RIKA-CHAN!?

.....

MEW!

WASHA (RUFFLE)

THERE'S NO WAY THERE'D BE A NEEDLE.

DON'T BE SILLY.

SO SHE WOULD NEVER DO ANYTHING LIKE THAT.

RIKA-CHAN, MION KNOWS WHAT'S OKAY AND WHAT'S NOT OKAY WHEN PLAYING PRANKS ON PEOPLE.

EH...? REALLY?

I JUST TOLD HER ABOUT SOME PERSONAL TRAUMA OF MINE, SO SHE WAS WORRIED ABOUT ME.

EVEN IF A NEEDLE DID WIND UP IN THERE, I'M SURE IT WOULD BE SOME KIND OF MISTAKE.

I WOULD NEVER DOUBT MY FRIENDS LIKE THAT!

AH...

TH...

THANK YOU, SIR.

HERE.

PAKU (CHOMP)

!?

NOW COME ON, HAVE SOME! THEY'RE REALLY GOOD!

WAH!

YOU'VE ONLY HAD ONE.

AAAAUGH...

IT'S SO ADOWABLE!!

RIKA-CHAN EATING OHAGI!!

GYUMU (SQUEEZE)

むっ

OY..

NN?

.....

HEY, MION.

THANKS FOR THE OHAGI.

THEY WERE DELI-CIOUS.

AH... AH HA HA HA!

WHY DO YOU HAVE TO TELL ME AGAIN!?

!

... HUH?

GOOD QUES-TION. WHY DO I?

...EH?

I JUST FELT LIKE I REALLY NEEDED TO SAY IT...

THOSE WERE THE WORDS THAT KEIICHI WISHED HE COULD HAVE SAID IN A WORLD LONG... LONG AGO.

THE KEIICHI IN THIS WORLD...

...WON'T EVER LET THE PARANOIA DRIVE HIM TO VIOLENCE.

AND AFTER SCHOOL...

...WE ALL WENT TO THE ASSEMBLY HALL AT FURUDE SHRINE...

...TO LOOK AT THE ITEMS THAT WERE DONATED FOR THE AUC-TION.

OHHH!

THERE'S ALL KINDS OF STUFF HERE!

YOU TOLD ME IT WAS ALL STUFF PEOPLE BROUGHT TO TOWN MEETINGS, SO I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE A BUNCH OF JUNK.

THERE'S EVEN AN ALMOST BRAND-NEW TV AND A REFRIG-ERATOR! I'M IMPRESSED!

BUT EVEN AN OLD, USED ITEM LIKE THIS WOULD BE NICE IF I CAN GET IT FOR CHEAP.

I SEE YOU HAVE AN INTEREST IN FURNITURE, RENA-SAN.

YES. MY DAD AND I HAVE BEEN TALKING ABOUT REDECORATING THE HOUSE.

REDECO-RATING?

THAT WILL BE QUITE THE UNDER-TAKING.

.....
WELL, MY DAD ...

... FINALLY GOT A JOB THE OTHER DAY.

SO WE FIGURED WE WOULD START EVERYTHING FRESH.

EH...?

RENA'S PARENTS DIVORCED AFTER HER MOTHER HAD AN AFFAIR.

ONE YEAR AGO, RENA AND HER FATHER CAME BACK TO HINAMIZAWA FROM IBARAKI.

AFTER ALL OF THAT MISFORTUNE...

TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE, TWO MEMBERS OF THE YAKUZA APPROACHED HIM, TRYING TO GET HIS MONEY.

BUT RENA'S FATHER WAS NEVER ABLE TO RECOVER FROM THE SHOCK OF THE DIVORCE ...

...AND HE COULDN'T EVEN WORK TO SUPPORT HIS FAMILY.

...IN ANOTHER WORLD, RENA RESORTED TO VIOLENCE AND KILLED THE YAKUZA.

I HAD...A DREAM.

EH ...?

I DREAMED THAT I KILLED TWO PEOPLE.

...THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN MY FUTURE.

I THINK THAT IF I HAD LEFT THINGS THE WAY THEY WERE...

THAT'S A DIS-TURBING DREAM.

...REALLY A DREAM?

WAS IT...

I STOPPED BEING ABLE TO TRUST ANYONE...

I WAS AFRAID OF EVERY-THING...

I DIDN'T WANT ANYONE TO KNOW I'D KILLED THEM.

I COULDN'T BEAR THE THOUGHT THAT THAT DREAM MIGHT BECOME A REALITY...!

IT FELT SO REAL.

...I GOT MYSELF TO OPEN UP TO MII-CHAN.

BUT THANKS TO THAT DREAM ...

WHAT DID YOU DO THEN, RENA-SAN?

...WELL, BEFORE, I THOUGHT THAT YOU'RE NOT SUP-POSED TO UNLOAD YOUR FAMILY PROBLEMS ON OTHER PEOPLE.

ALL I DID WAS LISTEN.

...YOU DID?

SHE HELPED ME FIND THE FIRST STEP TO A REALISTIC SOLUTION.

MII-CHAN WAS A REALLY BIG HELP.

AND THAT'S HOW I REALIZED ...

YOU ALWAYS END UP THINKING OF ALL THE BAD THINGS THAT COULD HAPPEN.

...IT DOESN'T HELP ANYTHING TO JUST AGONIZE OVER YOUR PROBLEMS ON YOUR OWN.

FRIENDS AREN'T JUST THERE TO HAVE FUN WITH YOU.

THEY'RE A CRUCIAL PART OF YOUR LIFE, THE PEOPLE YOU CAN GO TO WITH WHAT'S REALLY IM-PORTANT.

...HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO TALK TO PEOPLE ABOUT YOUR PROBLEMS.

IT'S SO OBVIOUS, BUT IT TOOK ME SO LONG TO REALIZE IT.

...
RENA
...

...A DREAM, HUH ...?

BOSO (WHISPER)

SHION?

AH! ME TOO!

RENA-SAN, THE NEXT TIME YOU HAVE A PROBLEM, TELL ME ABOUT IT TOO!

KUSU (CHUCKLE)

THANK YOU. AND I THINK YOU SHOULD COME TO ME WITH YOUR PROBLEMS TOO. I DO.

ZUI (ZOOM)

...THAT MUST BE TRUE...

...SAW THE VIOLENT ACTS SHE COMMITTED IN ANOTHER WORLD...

...IN A DREAM?

MAYBE SHION TOO...

BECAUSE SHE REMEMBERED THAT SATOSHI ENTRUSTED SATOKO TO HER.

THAT'S WHY SHE'S BEING SO SISTERLY TOWARD SATOKO IN THIS WORLD.

...DO YOU KNOW TOMITAKE, KEIICHI, SIR?

YEAH. I MET HIM ON THE WAY HOME FROM SCHOOL THE OTHER DAY.

カナ KANA (CHIRP)

カナ KANA

カナ KANA

カナ KANA

OF COURSE! WE'RE GONNA HEAT THINGS UP AS ALWAYS!

IT'S THE COTTON DRIFTING FREE-FOR-ALL!

HE'S THAT ENTHUSIASTIC PHOTOGRAPHER WHO COMES TO HINAMIZAWA AROUND THIS TIME EVERY YEAR, RIGHT?

SELF-STYLED PHOTOG-RAPHER.

OH HO HO!

WHENEVER HE SHOWS UP, THEN I KNOW IT'S GETTING CLOSE TO COTTON DRIFTING TIME.

MII-CHAN, DO YOU THINK HE'LL JOIN OUR CLUB ACTIVITY AGAIN THIS YEAR? DO YOU?

FU (FET)

...HANYU. WERE YOU WATCHING US?

YES.

FREE-FOR-ALL ...?

UHH.

IT'S A CLUB ACTIVITY WHERE WE GO AROUND ALL THE FESTIVAL BOOTHS

RIKA.

NO ONE SUSPECTS THEIR FRIENDS OF ANYTHING.

NO ONE IS ON THE VERGE OF MURDER.

AND RIKA CHAMA'S DANCE OFFERING, RIGHT?

BUT THE BIG EVENT THIS YEAR IS THE AUCTION!

THERE'S NEVER BEEN A WORLD LIKE THIS ONE BEFORE, SIR.

AH.

COME ON, WE'RE GOING HOME.

HEY, RIKA-CHAN?

SAWA... (RUSTLE)

I'M SURE...

...EVERY-THING WILL BE FINE.

WAIT FOR ME, SIR!

.....

...NO, THERE HASN'T.

NO ONE WILL BE DRAGGED INTO THE TRAGEDY THIS TIME ...!

RIKA.
YOU SHOULDN'T DRINK, SIR.
WHY NOT? I'M NOT A CHILD.
I'M MORE THAN A HUNDRED YEARS OLD.
...I FEEL LIKE GOD IN HEAVEN IS BLESSING ME.
KARAN (CLINK)
...SAY, HANYU ...
NOT ONLY KEIICHI, BUT RENA...
...AND SHION...
...THEY ALL REMEMBERED THEIR MISTAKES AND CRIMES FROM OTHER WORLDS IN THEIR DREAMS.
KUSU (CHUCKLE)
KUSU
SHION USED TO ALWAYS BULLY AND NEGLECT SATOKO. NOW SHE'S ACTING LIKE HER FUTURE SISTER-IN-LAW.
I CAN'T HELP BUT LAUGH.

.....

WILL YOU REALLY BE ABLE TO ESCAPE DESTINY THIS TIME? WILL YOU LIVE PAST JUNE 1983?

.....

THIS IS AN IDEAL WORLD, WHERE MY FRIENDS HAVE OVER-COME ALL OF THEIR WORRIES AND PROB-LEMS.

IT'S LIKE EVERY TIME I ROLL...

...THE DIE COMES UP SIX.

I CAN TELL...

...THAT THAT'S WHY HANYU IS SO NERVOUS.

...BASI-CALLY...

BUT I CAN'T LET MYSELF BE BEATEN! NO MATTER WHAT!

HA-NYU.

I'M SORRY, BUT...I WANT YOU TO GO OVER THIS WITH ME AGAIN.

.....

...IF I STILL DIE, EVEN IN THIS BLESSED WORLD...

YOU MEAN, WHY YOU HAVE TO BE MURDERED IN JUNE 1983, SIR?

...THEN THERE'S NO HOPE OF EVER CONQUERING MY DESTINY.

YES.

DESTINY IS CREATED BY A STRONG WILL.

THE FACT THAT THERE IS A STRONG WILL...

...MEANS THAT THE CRIMINAL HAS SOME CLEAR MOTIVE.

...TO BEGIN WITH, I CAN'T IMAGINE ANYONE IN THE VILLAGE HAVING A MOTIVE FOR MURDER.

I'M THE HEAD OF THE FURUDE FAMILY...

...AND THE REINCARNATION OF OYASHIRO-SAMA.

NO ONE IN THE VILLAGE WOULD HAVE ANY REASON TO DISLIKE ME.

...FOR A LONG TIME, I THOUGHT THAT THE SONOZAKIS WERE BEHIND IT.

BUT THAT TURNED OUT TO BE WRONG.

...THAT BEING THE CASE, WE DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE TO LOOK.

...I REALIZED HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO TALK TO PEOPLE ABOUT YOUR PROBLEMS.

...IT DOESN'T HELP ANYTHING TO JUST AGONIZE OVER YOUR PROBLEMS ON YOUR OWN.

...HANYU.

TALK TO PEO-PLE, HUH ...?

EH?

SFX KUSU (CHUCKLE)

LET'S TRY TAKING THE PROBLEM TO IRIE.

...NOT JUST IRIE.

TAKANO ...

...AND TOMITAKE TOO.

...THOSE THREE WOULD HAVE THE POWER TO PROTECT ME...

WHO-EVER IT IS THAT'S OUT TO KILL ME...

...BECAUSE THEY HAVE A VERY POWERFUL BACKER.

BUT RIKA!

YOU DID TALK TO THEM IN A WORLD LONG AGO!

AND THEY WOULDN'T BELIEVE A WORD YOU SAID!

IT'S TRUE THAT I ASKED THEM TO PROTECT ME IN A PREVIOUS WORLD.

AND IT WAS A WASTE OF TIME.

NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES I TOLD THEM, THEY WOULDN'T BELIEVE ME.

IN THE END, BOTH TAKANO AND TOMITAKE DIED ON THE NIGHT OF THE COTTON DRIFTING.

AND FINALLY, I WAS MURDERED.

SO I HAD RESIGNED MYSELF TO THE IDEA THAT THEY WERE DESTINED TO DIE.

AND I GAVE UP ON GOING TO THEM FOR HELP.

BUT ...

LISTEN, RIKA-CHAN!

...I'M GONNA TAKE THAT DESTINY AND TEAR IT TO SHREDS!!

BI (FWIP)

KOTO (CLINK)

SAA (SHH)

THIS TIME...

...I'LL MAKE THEM BELIEVE.

BECAUSE I AM THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN CHANGE THEIR DESTINY...!!

I WILL FIGHT WITH EVERY-THING IN MY POWER.

AND WHEN THEY BELIEVE ME, THEY'LL TRY TO PROTECT ME.

.....

BE-CAUSE ...

...MY DEATH ...

...WILL LEAD TO THE DESTRUCTION OF HINAMI-ZAWA.

I, RIKA FURUDE, WILL BE MURDERED IN JUNE OF 1983.

AND...

...MY DEATH IS ALWAYS PRECEDED BY THE MURDER OF JIROU TOMITAKE AND MIYO TAKANO.

TO OVER-TURN THIS DES-TINY ...

TA

...I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO GET TOMITAKE AND TAKANO TO BELIEVE ME.

BUT MERELY TALKING TO THEM WON'T DO ANY GOOD.

PITA (STOP)

...SO TO ACHIEVE MY GOAL ...

I WILL VIOLATE THE SANCTITY OF THE SEALED SAIGUDEN.

CHAPTER 5: MIRACULOUS REUNION

REALLY?

YOU'RE REALLY GOING TO SHOW US INSIDE THE SAIGUDEN ...?

YES, SIR!

AND IN EXCHANGE, I WANT YOU TO LISTEN TO WHAT I HAVE TO SAY AFTERWARD. HEE-HEE!

PURU (TREMBLE)

PURU

HEH HEH HEH HEH.

WHEE HEE HEE!

KURU

KURU (SPIN)

KURU

.....

.....

I HAD NO IDEA MYSELF.

I DIDN'T REAL ZE THAT TAKANO WAS SUCH AN INTERESTING PERSON, S.R...

!!?

GAKO (SHOONK)

カシ

...

...ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THIS, RIKA-CHAN?

.....

HURRY, HURRY!

OPEN IT, OPEN IT!

I'M OPENING IT NOW, SIR.

GIIIII (CREEEAK)

PASHA (CLICK)

PASHA

(SWOON) HOL

ふう…

THIS IS... ...REALLY SOME-THING ELSE...

BIKU (JITTER)

BIKU

EH HEH! IT'S WON-DERFUL ...

I'M AGAINST THIS, SIR.

LETTING TAKANO INTO THE SAIGUDEN...

HA-NYU...

I KNOW JUST HOW HANYU FEELS.

THIS SAIGUDEN IS A VERY PRECIOUS PLACE TO HANYU, A PLACE WHERE AIR FROM ANCIENT TIMES STILL LINGERS.

SHE DOESN'T WANT ANY HUMANS TO COME IN AND DEFILE IT...

...MUCH LESS SOMEONE WITH AS VILE AN INTEREST IN IT AS TAKANO.

PASHA (FLASH)

PASHA

KUSU (GIGGLE)

KUSU

KUSU

MAGNIFICENT. ALL THESE TORTURE DEVICES...

YOU MIGHT SAY THIS IS THE TRUE HISTORY OF HINAMIZAWA... NO, OF ONIGAFUCHI.

HOWEVER ...

.....

...THIS TIME, I'M GOING TO USE TAKANO'S INTEREST TO MY ADVANTAGE.

TAKANO IS AN OCCULT FANATIC THROUGH AND THROUGH.

SHE HAS ALWAYS BEEN FASCI-NATED ...

...BY THE "DEMON" LEGENDS HANDED DOWN THROUGH HINAMIZAWA'S HISTORY AND MORE ESPECIALLY THE TORTURE DEVICES HIDDEN INSIDE THIS SAIGUDEN.

THAT INTEREST REACHES ITS PEAK ...

...AND DRIVES HER TO TRY SNEAKING INTO THE SAIGUDEN ON THE NIGHT OF THE 1983 COTTON DRIFTING IN EVERY WORLD.

SO THIS TIME, I CUT TO THE CHASE AND SHOWED HER THE SAIGUDEN MYSELF...

...AS A PART OF A DEAL TO GET HER TO LISTEN TO WHAT I HAVE TO SAY...

MAG-NIFI-CENT ...

TRULY MAGNIF-ICENT!

ZOKU! (CHILL)

ZOKU

DON'T YOU AGREE, JIROU-SAN?

N... NO...

HINAMI-ZAWA ONCE LIVED UNDER STRICT RELIGIOUS PRECEPTS ...

...AS ONIGAFUCHI— THE VILLAGE OF DEMONS.

THESE TORTURE DEVICES WERE USED ON ALL WHO BROKE THOSE PRECEPTS...

...AND OH, WHAT A TERRIBLE FATE THEY MET.

SHE IS ONLY INTER-ESTED IN HINA-MIZAWA'S DARK AND BLOODY HISTORY.

TAKANO HAS NO RESPECT FOR OYASHIRO-SAMA.

DO YOU KNOW HOW TERRIBLE IT WAS, JIROU-SAN?

TSUI (LOOM)

N...

NO...

THAT'S WHY HANYU AND I BOTH HATE TAKANO.

SIMPLY MARVEL-OUS...

THESE INSTRU-MENTS OF CRUELTY...

!!

...TRULY EXPRESS THE SINISTER NATURE OF THE DEITY OYASHIRO-SAMA.

...WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

THAT'S NOT TRUE !!

ESSENTIALLY, OYASHIRO-SAMA'S MAIN SUPPORTER WAS THE TERROR CAUSED BY THESE TORTURE DEVICES.

OYASHIRO-SAMA IS A CRUEL, BLOODY, AND ACCURSED GOD!!

...HANYU...

NI! (SMIRK)

OH?

WELL, YOU SEE...

...THESE DEVICES EXISTED TO FORCE PEOPLE TO BELIEVE IN OYASHIRO-SAMA...

...AND ABIDE BY THOSE PRECEPTS.

TO PUT IT ANOTHER WAY, OYASHIRO-SAMA'S "EXISTENCE" BECAME A REALITY ONLY THROUGH FEAR AND TORTURE.

I HATE IT WHEN PEOPLE DIE OR SUFFER AT THE HANDS OF OTHERS!

I NEVER WISHED FOR THAT! NOT ONCE!!

...AH.

LONG AGO, IN THE DAYS OF ONIGA-FUCHI...

...HANYU WAS WORSHIPPED AS THE DEITY OYASHIRO-SAMA.

SHE WITNESSED COUNTLESS SCENES OF HELLISH TORTURE, ALL DONE IN HER NAME.

BUT NO ONE WOULD HEAR HER CRIES OF PROTEST.

PORO (DRIP)

UHH...

YOU ALWAYS SAY SUCH TER-RIBLE THINGS ABOUT ME!!!

I HATE YOU, TAKA-NO!!

NO!

I'M NOT LIKE THAT !!

DAN

DAN (STAMP)

DAN

DAN

I WAS THINKING ONLY OF MYSELF.

BUT I STILL DID THIS, IN THE NAME OF CHANGING MY OWN DESTINY.

...I WAS WELL AWARE THAT HANYU DESPISES TAKANO.

DAN

DAN

DAN

SHH!

TAKANO-SAN, BE QUIET.

うっとり

UTTORI (DREAMY)

THAT IS OYASHIRO-SAMA...!

THE EMBODI-MENT OF PURE FEAR, BLOOD, AND TORTURE.

SOMEONE MIGHT BE NEARBY. WE NEED TO KEEP IT DOWN.

I THINK I HEAR A CHILD JUMPING UP AND DOWN IN THE DISTANCE ...

VERY RARELY THIS WILL HAPPEN.

I WAS SURE I HEARD SOME-THING. IT WAS FAINT, BUT...

YOU DIDN'T ...?

REALLY? I DIDN'T HEAR ANYTHING.

AH...

MAYBE HANYU'S DES-PERATE PLEAS REACHED HIM...

UKKU (SOB)

SOME-ONE WILL SENSE HANYU'S PRESENCE.

NOW THEN, TAKANO.

SU (STEP)

WILL YOU KEEP YOUR PROMISE AND LISTEN TO WHAT I HAVE TO SAY?

Y... YES.

RIGHT... THAT WAS THE AGREE-MENT.

I, RIKA FURUDE, AM ABSOLUTELY FATED TO BE MURDERED IN JUNE OF 1983.

IN ORDER TO ESCAPE THAT DESTINY...

...I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO CONVINCE THESE TWO TO BELIEVE ME.

...WILL STRIKE AGAIN THIS YEAR.

OYA-SHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE ...

OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE...? YOU MEAN THE SERIES OF MYSTERIOUS DEATHS THAT OCCUR ON THE NIGHT OF THE COTTON DRIFTING?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

IT'S GOING TO HAPPEN AGAIN THIS YEAR?

EH ...?

YES...

SO YOU'RE SAYING SOMEONE IS GOING TO DIE THIS YEAR...?

CHIKA (FLICKER)

CHIKA

THIS TIME, BE-LIEVE ME...

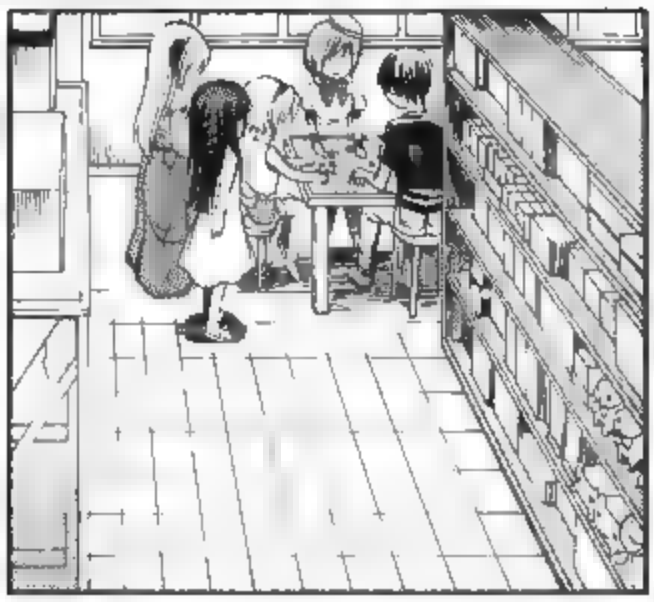
TOMI-TAKE.

TA-KANO.

YOU ARE GOING TO DIE.

...I'VE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO CONVINCE YOU BEFORE.

BUT PLEASE.



JARA
JARA
JARA
(RATTLE)

HEH. I WILL BE THE FIRST TO MASTER THE GREATEST CHEAT IN ALL OF MAH-JONG HISTORY— THE SWALLOW SWITCH!

HEH.
YOU WON'T BEAT ME.

OTHERWISE I'LL BE IN TROUBLE IF WE PLAY MAHJONG FOR CLUB.

RENA WANTS TO TRY IT TOO!

DO YOU HONESTLY THINK I WOULD LET YOU SURPASS ME, KEIICHI-SAN?

OH HO HO!

ALLLL RIGHT!

ANYONE WHO DOESN'T MASTER IT GETS A PENALTY GAME!

EEEH!?

WH-WHAT!?

PLEASE BE CAREFUL!

EEEP!

OH! THAT COULD WORK!

WE CAME HERE TODAY TO FIND TOYS TO PUT IN THE AUCTIONS SO THAT THE KIDS CAN ENJOY IT TOO...

I WOULDN'T HAVE IT ANY OTHER WAY!

AND EVERYONE DECIDED THAT THEY WOULD TRY LEARNING THE CHEAT THAT THE CUSTOMER FROM THIS AFTERNOON HAD BEEN USING— THE SWALLOW SWITCH.

BUT WE FOUND A MAH-JONG SET THAT HAD BEEN LEFT OUT.

GASHAAAN (CLATTER)

AH!

...TIME KEEPS MOVING ON.

IN SPITE OF ALL MY ANXIETY

GU (GRIP)

GU

GU

WILL THIS CHANGE MY DESTINY...?

HEY. .....

...I'VE TOLD TAKANO AND TOMITAKE EVERYTHING I NEEDED TO TELL THEM.

I'VE DONE EVERYTHING I COULD, RIGHT?

BUT WE WON'T KNOW UNTIL THE TIME COMES.

THEIR ANSWERS WEREN'T VAGUE LIKE THEY WERE IN PREVIOUS WORLDS.

I DON'T KNOW IF THEY BELIEVE ME...

...BUT THEY PROM-, ISED TO HELP.

ALL RIGHT, RIKA-CHAN. WE PROMISE TO PROTECT YOU.

KARAN (JANGLE)

BUT GIVE ME A SIGN TO LET ME KNOW HOW IT WILL TURN OUT...!

.....

PLEASE, GOD. IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE BIG.

中

GASHAN (CRASH)

...OO-ISHI.

WHAT?

THIS IS NOT A GOOD SIGN...

OH?

WELL, IF IT ISN'T OOISHI-SAN.

SHOULD YOU REALLY BE COMING INTO A TOY STORE WHILE YOU'RE ON DUTY?

WHAT'S GOING ON TODAY?

DON (DUN)

WHAT HAVE WE HERE?

OH.

THIS IS THE MAN I WAS TELLING YOU ABOUT. THE ONE WHO WAS IN HERE SHOWING ME THE SWALLOW SWITCH.

NN FU FU.

OH, DON'T WORRY. I'M NOT ON DUTY TODAY.

NN-FU-FU. BUT IT DOESN'T DO ANY GOOD IN A REAL GAME.

IT'S JUST A PARLOR TRICK

WH-WH-WH-WH-WHAT!?

NA-HA-HA! OF COURSE!

O-OOISHI-SAN! PLEASE! TEACH ME HOW TO DO IT!

I WANT TO MASTER IT!

OH! I GET IT!

LIKE THIS

YOU DON'T HAVE TO LIFT IT UP.

NO, NO. NOT LIKE THAT!

SO, UM ...

...I DO THIS LIKE THIS?

.....

...INDEED.

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME KEIICHI AND OOISHI HAVE BEEN FRIENDLY!

AND ALWAYS AS A DETECTIVE.

...AFTER THE FIFTH YEAR'S MUR-DER.

IN ALL THE WORLDS BEFORE THIS ONE, OOISHI MAKES CONTACT WITH KEIICHI...

OOISHI NEVER THOUGHT OF KEIICHI AS ANYTHING MORE THAN A MOLE, SOMEONE TO SPY ON THE VILLAGE.

BUT THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE.

HE WOULD NEVER HIT IT OFF WITH KEIICHI LIKE THIS. IT'S UNTHINKABLE!

JUST LIKE THAT.

KARAN (JANGLE)

THERE YOU ARE, OOISHI-SAN.

AH.

WHEN OOISHI SHOWED UP, I THOUGHT IT WAS A SIGN OF BAD LUCK.

BUT IS IT ACTUALLY GOOD LUCK?

DOKUN

DOKUN

IT SOUNDS VERY FAMILIAR.

A-VOICE I HEARD SOME-WHERE LONG AGO...

DOKUN

DOKUN

...WHOSE VOICE IS THAT?

DOKUN

DOKUN

KO (CLACK)

KO

NO.

IT CAN'T BE. IT'S NOT POSSIBLE!!

HUH?

IS THAT...

DOKUN

DOKUN

...RIKA-CHAN?

!!!

IT IS YOU, RIKA-CHAN.

IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN.

NIKO (SMILE)

A...
A...

PON (PAT)

...I THINK YOU'VE GOTTEN A LITTLE TALLER.

!

DOK.

DOK.

YOU SEEM STRONGER...

Y...

YOU'VE GROWN TOO, SIR.

DOK! (BADUM)

...
AKASAKA
...

I DIDN'T KNOW YOU KNEW AKASAKA-KUN.

HUH? A FRIEND OF YOURS?

THIS IS MAMORU AKASAKA.

BE-CAUSE HE HAS NO CON-NECTION TO HINA-MIZAWA ..

IF THERE IS SOME KIND OF CONSPIRACY GOING ON IN THE VILLAGE, HE'S GUAR-ANTEED TO HAVE NOTHING TO DO WITH IT.

IN A SENSE, HE'S THE PERSON I CAN TRUST THE MOST.

I'VE SENT HIM AN S.O.S. SEVERAL TIMES.

BUT HE'S NEVER COME BACK TO HINAMI-ZAWA.

HE'S A POLICE-MAN FROM TOKYO.

THE LIKELI-HOOD IS EXTREMELY LOW, BUT HE SOMETIMES COMES TO HINAMI-ZAWA IN 1978.

SO...

...I HAD GIVEN UP ON HIM.

BUT NOW HERE HE IS, RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME...

...NOT A DREAM.

IT'S...

SO ~W'...
(STROKE)

HE CAN'T BE HERE IN 1983! IT'S IMPOSSIBLE ...!

HA (GASP)

HUH?

BUT WHY...?

WHAT ARE YOU DOING BACK IN HINAMIZAWA, AKASAKA?

EH...? WIFE?

I LEFT MY DAUGH-TER WITH MY PARENTS ...

...AND CAME TO VISIT WITH MY WIFE.

REMEMBER?

FIVE YEARS AGO, YOU TOLD ME THAT IF I DIDN'T GO BACK TO TOKYO...

...SOMETHING BAD WOULD HAPPEN.

THAT'S RIGHT.

I ALWAYS WARNED HIM.

HIS WIFE YUKIE WAS IN THE HOSPITAL FOR HER PREGNANCY, AND IN EVERY WORLD, SHE GOES UP TO THE ROOF AND DIES IN AN ACCIDENT THERE AT THE HOSPITAL.

I ALWAYS FELT SO SORRY FOR THEM.

HE'S NEVER BELIEVED MY WARNING BEFORE ...

...BUT THIS TIME, HE LISTENED TO ME.

INSTEAD, THE ACCIDENT INVOLVED ONE OF THE HOSPITAL CLEANING STAFF SLIPPING ON A LOOSE TILE ON THE STAIRS TO THE ROOF.

...YUKIE NEVER HAD THAT ACCI-DENT.

AND BE-CAUSE AKA-SAKA WENT BACK TO THE HOSPI-TAL...

YUKIE IS ALIVE BECAUSE OF YOU, RIKA-CHAN.

THANK YOU.

...CHANGED IN THIS WORLD.

THE SAD FATE THAT ALWAYS BEFELL HIM...

NIPA (BEAM)

I'M SO GLAD...

...AKASAKA, SIR!

YES.

WILL SATO-SAN BE THERE ALREADY?

WHOOPS.

LOOK AT THE TIME.

SO I'VE HEARD.

THE FESTIVAL ISN'T JUST A DRINKING PARTY LIKE IT WAS THE LAST TIME YOU WERE HERE, SIR.

HOW LONG WILL YOU BE IN TOWN, AKASAKA?

WE PLAN ON STAYING FOR THE COTTON DRIFTING FESTIVAL.

!

SU... (SHHP)

YUKIE OWES YOU HER LIFE.

I PROMISE I'LL RETURN THE FAVOR.

IN JUNE 1983...

...I WILL BE KILLED.

IT'S BEEN FIVE YEARS.

I'VE TRAINED PHYSI-CALLY ...

...AND I HAVE MORE EXPERIENCE.

I...

...WANT TO LIVE!

I KNOW I CAN HELP YOU.

AKASAKA
...

SEE YOU LATER, RIKA-CHAN.

UHH...
ALL I CAN THINK IS THAT ALL KINDS OF DESTINIES ARE ON YOUR SIDE THIS TIME, RIKA, SIR.

...THINKING ABOUT IT, IT WAS THAT DAY, WHEN WE HAD OUR CLUB ACTIVITY AT THE TOY STORE...

...THE MOMENT I OVER-TURNED MY DESTINY TO PLAY THE FISHING GAME...

...THE WORLD CHANGED.

IS THE INCREASED STRENGTH OF MY WILL TO FIGHT...

...SHAKING THE FOUNDATIONS OF DESTINY...?

UHH

.....

DON'T YOU AGREE, HANYU?

IF SO...

...THEN I'M SURE TAKANO AND TOMITAKE BELIEVE ME TOO.

AND IN THAT CASE...

...I CAN CUT A PATH TO A NEW DESTINY.

BECAUSE THAT'S HOW MUCH POWER THEY HAVE.

AND THAT CONCLUDES OUR MEETING FOR TODAY.

YOU'VE GIVEN US WONDERFUL RESULTS, DR. IRIE.
NOW WE HAVE A LEAD ON HOW TO CURE THIS DISEASE.
NIKO (SMILE)
TON (TAP)
TON
...AND TO YOU, FOR BEING MY LIAISON WITH TOKYO...
...I OWE IT ALL TO MY MAGNIFICENT STAFF...

OH, I'M JUST A GO-BE-TWEEN.

COMPARED TO WHAT YOU AND TAKANO-SAN HAVE DONE, MY EFFORTS ARE NOTHING.

DON'T SELL YOURSELF SHORT.

...INSPECTOR TOMITAKE.

YOU EVEN PRETEND TO BE A FREELANCE PHOTOGRA-PHER...

...TO MAINTAIN THE COMPLETE CONFIDEN-TIALITY OF OUR RE-SEARCH.

ALTHOUGH BECAUSE OF MY COVER, PEOPLE KEEP ASKING ME WHEN I'M GOING TO MAKE MY MAJOR DEBUT.

LIKE MION-CHAN.

HEE HEE

HA HA HA

SO THE RESEARCH IS JUST ABOUT IN ITS FINAL STAGES?

YES. THERE'S STILL THE PROBLEM OF THE COST OF TREATMENT.

BUT WE HAVE AN IDEA OF HOW TO SOLVE THAT AS WELL.

THIS DISEASE... THE SO-CALLED...

..."OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE," IS ON THE VERGE OF ERADICATION.

SO PATIENTS LIKE SATOKO-CHAN WILL BE ABLE TO RECOVER?

.....

WE HAVE RIKA-CHAN TO THANK FOR THAT. SHE'S BEEN VERY HELPFUL IN KEEPING OUR SECRET.

NO... SATOKO-CHAN'S SYMPTOMS HAVE REACHED LEVEL FIVE. IT WILL BE DIFFICULT FOR HER TO MAKE A FULL RECOVERY.

...BUT I BELIEVE THAT WE CAN KEEP HER AT A LEVEL WHERE SHE WILL BE FREE FROM HALLUCINATIONS.

IT'S RIKA-CHAN ...

IS SOME-THING THE MATTER?

.....

RIKA-CHAN EVEN ENDURED OUR INHUMANE EXAMINA-TIONS...

EH?

IS IT POSSIBLE THAT SHE HAS CONTRACTED HINAMIZAWA SYNDROME?

MURDERED?

RIKA-CHAN?

...I CAN'T IMAGINE THAT ANYONE IN THIS VILLAGE WOULD WANT TO KILL RIKA-CHAN.

.....

AND WE'RE GOING TO BE MURDERED FIRST.

THAT'S WHY SHE ASKED US TO TAKE MEASURES TO KEEP HER SAFE.

SO I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE THE EARLY STAGES OF HINAMI-ZAWA SYNDROME— THE PERSECUTION COMPLEX AND THE SENSE THAT SHE IS BEING FOLLOWED.

I KNOW.

...BUT IF THIS IS SOME FORM OF DELUSION, I WOULDN'T WANT TO BLOW THINGS OUT OF PROPORTION.

GOOD QUES-TION.

SHE IS SOMEONE WE CAN'T AFFORD TO LOSE.

...BUT WHAT WILL WE DO ABOUT KEEPING HER SAFE?

I'LL DO AN EXAMINA-TION ON HER AS SOON AS I CAN.

.....

SHE TRUSTS US, AND WE NEED TO EARN THAT TRUST BY RESPONDING TO HER FEELINGS.

SHE'S NEVER REFUSED TO HELP US WITH ANY ASPECT OF OUR RE-SEARCH.

AND NOT ONLY THAT.

JIROU-SAN, RIKA-CHAN WAS KIND ENOUGH TO SHOW US SOMETHING VERY IMPORTANT.

YES, THAT'S FINE.

IT WOULDN'T BE EASY TO CALL A WATCHDOG FROM TOKYO, AFTER ALL.

YOU'RE RIGHT.

THEN CAN WE PLACE HER IN PROTECTIVE CUSTODY UNDER YOUR AUTHORITY, TAKANO-SAN?

AS OF THIS MOMENT, RIKA FURUDE WILL BE PROVIDED WITH TWENTY-FOUR-HOUR PROTECTION FROM THE WILD DOG FOUR.

WE WON'T LET ANYONE LAY A FINGER ON HER.

KOKU (NOD)

RIKA-CHAN WILL LIKE THAT.

HA (GASP)

THAT'S RIGHT!

IF WE DO THIS, SHE MIGHT LET US SEE THAT PLACE AGAIN...

HEE-HEE-HEE. LONG LIVE THE MYSTERIES OF ONIGA-FUCHI VILLAGE!!

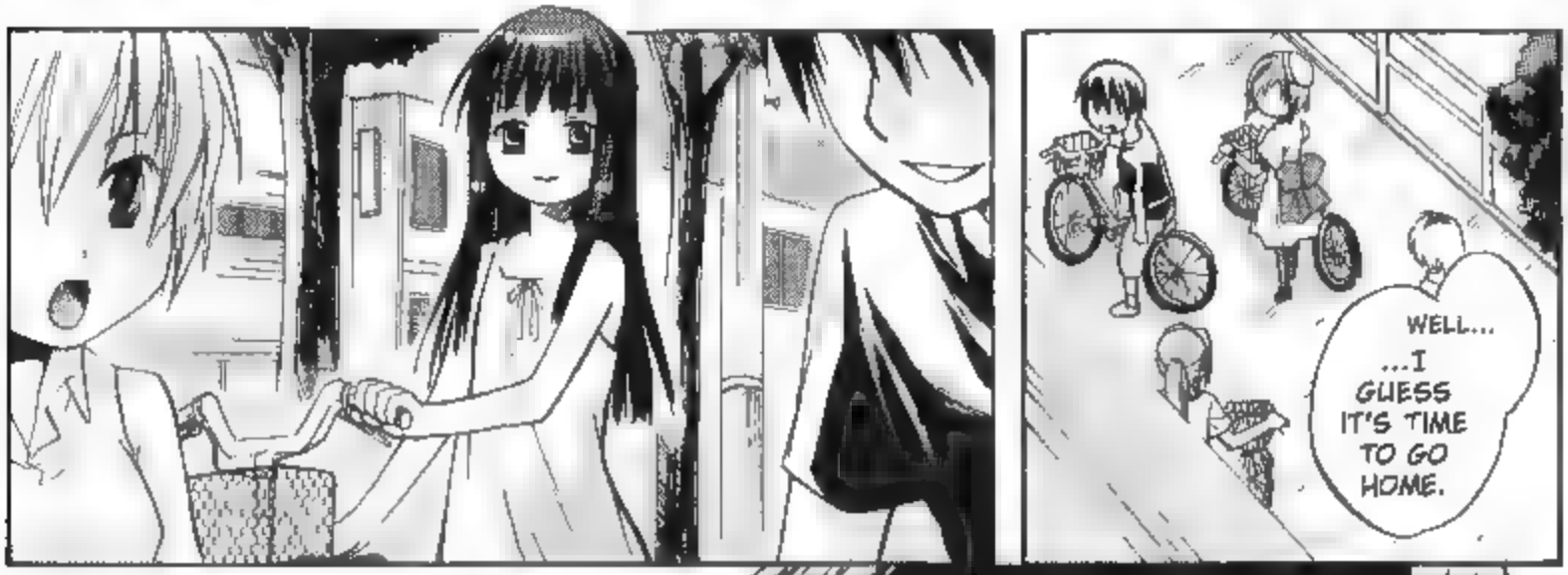
NIPAAAA (BEEEAM)

KURU (WHIRL)

KURU KURU

T...TAKANO-SAN. DID SOMETHING PARTICULARLY GOOD HAP-PEN?

AH HA HA HA ...



EVERYTHING IS GOING SMOOTHLY.

THERE WAS EVEN ANOTHER MIRACLE—I GOT TO SEE AKASAKA.

THIS TIME...

THERE'S NOTHING LEFT TO INTERFERE WITH MY FATE.

...I WILL BREAK DOWN MY DESTINY !!

WHAT'RE YOU LOOKIN' AT, AHH!?

—BUT...

DAMN. WHERE THE HELL DID THAT RINA GO OFF TO?

...I HAD FORGOTTEN.

ABOUT TEPPEI MOJO.

FINE

©Ryukishi07/Project Higurashi
WHEN THEY CRY

ABOUT THE "MASSACRE ARC": WHAT LIES BEHIND THE MURDERS

ORIGINAL STORY, SUPERVISOR: RYUKISHI07

HELLO, I'M RYUKISHI07.

THE EXPLANATION OF THE RULES X, Y, AND Z AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS VOLUME INDICATES THAT THIS LONG ARC WILL FINALLY TAKE US TO THE DEPTHS OF THE MYSTERY.

THESE THREE RULES INTERTWINE IN COMPLEX PATTERNS, CREATING THE STORIES LEADING UP TO THIS ONE.
...AND WHEN YOU PUT THE PREVIOUS STORIES TOGETHER AND LOOK THROUGH THEM, WHAT COMES FAINTLY INTO VIEW ARE THESE RULES.

THINKING ON IT, I SUSPECT OUR SOCIETY IS SIMILAR. EACH AND EVERY INCIDENT HAS ITS OWN CONCLUSION. BUT IN MOST CASES, THE MOTIVE AND THE BACKGROUND OF EACH CRIME NEVER COME TO LIGHT.

HOWEVER, IF YOU PUT ALL THE INCIDENTS TOGETHER, MAYBE YOU CAN START TO SEE CERTAIN RULES BEHIND THEM...?

I WANT US NOT TO THINK ABOUT EACH INCIDENT INDIVIDUALLY, BUT TO FIND THE BACKGROUND TO EACH ONE. I THINK THAT BY DOING THAT, WE WILL BE ABLE TO KEEP THINKING PAST THE TRIVIAL PROBLEM OF "WHO DID IT?" AND THINK ABOUT WHY THESE CRIMES HAPPEN.

WE CAN DISCOVER THE PROBLEM AND FACE IT AND FIGHT TO PREVENT THESE THINGS FROM HAPPENING AGAIN. THIS IS WHAT IT MEANS TO OPPOSE THE TRAGEDY.

AND NOW THAT YOU KNOW THE RULES, YOU CAN PUT A PERIOD ON ALL THE PREVIOUS *HIGURASHI* STORIES, RIFE WITH MYSTERIES, AND GET CLOSER TO WHAT LIES BENEATH IT ALL.

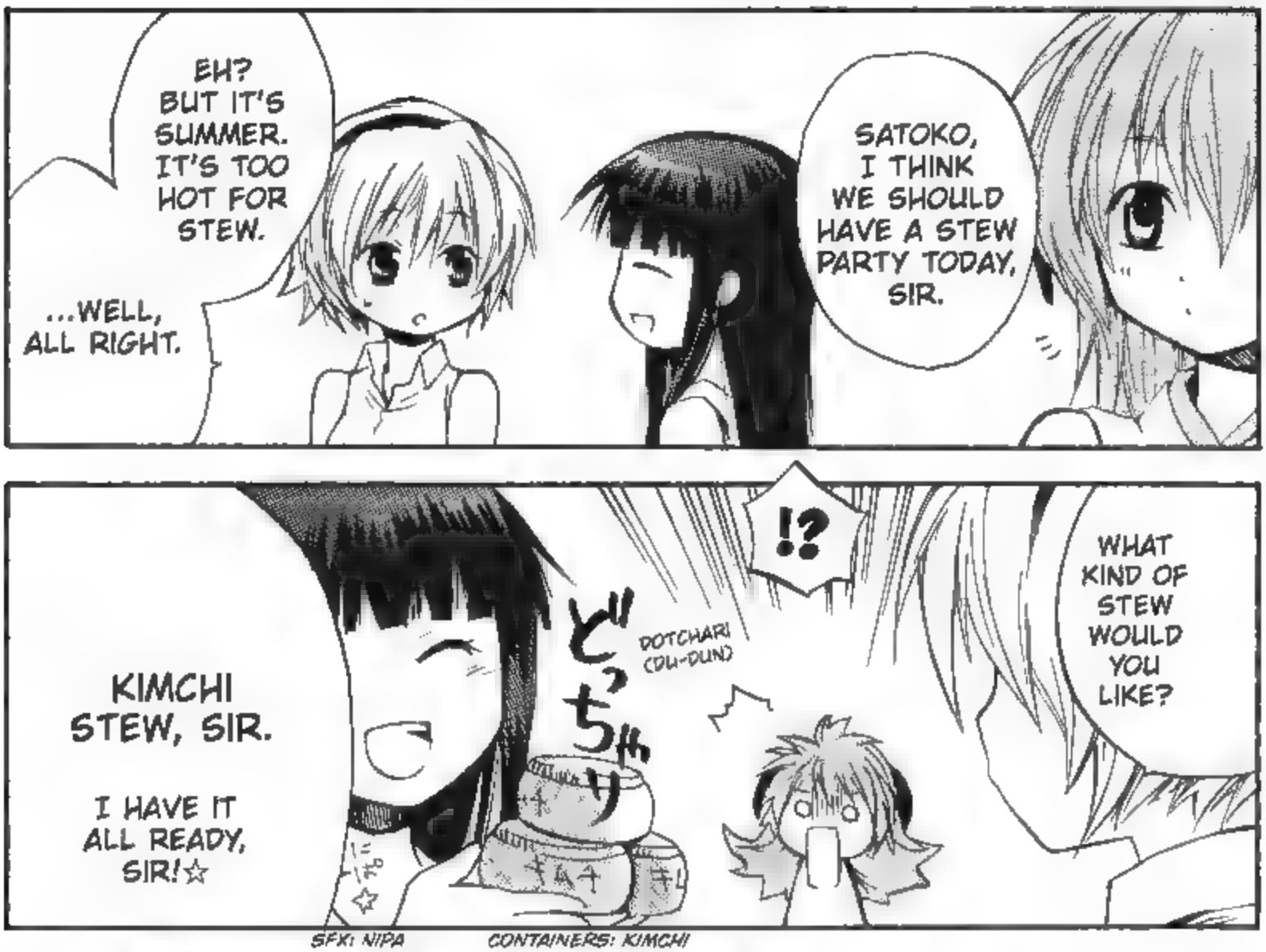
I HOPE YOU WILL ALL JOIN RIKA AND SEE THIS STORY THROUGH TO THE END.

RUSSIAN PUFFLETTE

MY NAME IS HANYU, SIR.
HELLO.
SOMETIMES I CAN FEEL WHAT SHE FEELS.
I HAVE A DEEP CONNECTION WITH RIKA, WHICH IS WHY SHE'S THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN SEE ME.
ONE OF THEM HAS PEPPER IN IT. HEH-HEH-HEH.
YAY! I LOVE CREAM PUFFS!
A CREAM PUFF!!!
AH!
AND SO...
SFX: NIPAAA (BEEEAM)
EH!? ISN'T IT SPICY!?
I FOUND IT, SIR.
?
I THINK IT'S FUNNY, SO I'M DOING MY BEST NOT TO LET IT BOTHER ME, SIR.
SPICY!!?

I love Rika-chama because she can eat a pepper cream puff with a straight face, all for Hanyu. (←Huh?)

STEW PARTY


EH? BUT IT'S SUMMER. IT'S TOO HOT FOR STEW.
...WELL, ALL RIGHT.
SATOKO, I THINK WE SHOULD HAVE A STEW PARTY TODAY, SIR.
WHAT KIND OF STEW WOULD YOU LIKE?
!?
DOTCHARI (DU-DUN)
どっちゃり
KIMCHI STEW, SIR.
I HAVE IT ALL READY, SIR!☆
SFX: NIPA
CONTAINERS: KIMCHI

Apparently she enjoys tormenting Hanyu.

HIDING HER BASHFULNESS

Good kids, don't copy Rika

HOW DO YOU
LIKE THE "MASSACRE ARC"?
I HOPE YOU ENJOYED IT. THE REAL BATTLE
STARTS IN THE NEXT VOLUME. IT WILL BE TRULY PAINFUL FOR
RIKA AND HER FRIENDS...BUT I HOPE THAT I CAN KEEP DRAW-
ING TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITIES AS THEY WORK AND GROW IN
THEIR ATTEMPTS TO BEAT DESTINY.

SPECIAL-SPECIAL THANKS!!
ORIGINAL STORY, SUPERVISOR: RYUKISHI07-SAMA, BT-SAMA
EDITORS: NAKAGAWA-SAMA, KOIZUMI-SAMA

MY ASSISTANTS, WHO MET MY UNREASONABLE
DEMANDS (HEH)! (YOU'RE THE BEST!)
MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY WHO SUPPORTED
ME BEHIND THE SCENES! (I LOVE YOU!)
...AND YOU!!!

Higurashi
WHEN THEY CRY
MASSACRE ARC

I WILL BE MURDERED IN JUNE 1983.

I TOLD THEM THAT THEY WERE FATED TO DIE AND ASKED FOR THEIR HELP.

...I WENT TO TOMITAKE AND TAKANO, WHO ARE KILLED ON THE NIGHT OF THE COTTON DRIFTING IN EVERY WORLD.

BUT RESOLVING TO STAND AND FIGHT MY DESTINY...

...IS THE SUREST SIGN I NEED TO CONVINCE ME THAT THE GOD OF FORTUNE IS STANDING BEHIND ME.

BUT MY MIRACULOUS REUNION WITH AKASAKA...

I DON'T KNOW THEIR ANSWER YET.

NO STAR-CROSSED DESTINY ...

I KNOW THAT I'LL ROLL A SIX BEFORE I EVEN THROW THE DIE. ...THAT'S THE KIND OF LUCK I HAVE BEHIND ME.

I WILL TEAR DOWN MY DESTINY!

...CAN POSSIBLY STOP ME NOW.

ZA (SKFF)

HEY ...

UWAH ...!

BASHAN (CRASH)

KIKI (SCREECH)

!

WHAT THE HELL'D YOU DO TO OUR BIKES !!?

DON DUN

YOU TOTALLY TRASHED 'EM!

KUWA (RAWR)

GA (GRAB)

UHH... UHH... THIS IS TER-RIBLE, SIR.

ORO

TH-THIS IS BAD.

JORO (FLUSTER)

WE SHOULD CALL THE POLICE.

BA-! (JUMP)

STOP IT! PUT HIM DOWN!

LET ME TAKE CARE OF THIS, SIR.

IT'S ALL RIGHT, SATOKO.

SU (BRUSH)

UHH!

...DO YOU HAVE A PLAN, SIR!?

DO ...

EH ...?

RIKA !?

WHAT?

NO.

THE LUCK I HAVE NOW WILL GET US OUT OF THIS SOMEHOW.

BUT A TINY OBSTACLE LIKE THIS IS HARDLY ENOUGH TO BLOCK MY WAY.

...AND I'M GOING TO PROVE IT!

NN? WHAT'S WITH THE KID?

PITA (STOP)

RIKA! NO, IT'S TOO DANGER-OUS...!

RIKA!

WHAAA!?

!!

RIKA-CHAN?

HEH.

GET LOST, YOU THIRD-RATE PUNKS.

YOU THINK YOU CAN KEEP ME FROM MY DESTINY? NOT EVEN IN YOUR DREAMS.

YOU'RE GONNA GET HURT !!

GU GUENG

NOW. HOW ARE YOU GOING TO PROTECT ME?

DAMMIT. YOU LOOKIN' DOWN ON US? LIKE WE'RE LITTLE KIDS OR SOME-THIN'...?

SHOW ME THE POWER OF THE LUCK THAT ALWAYS ROLLS A SIX!

GASHI (CLAMP)

OOOO (WHOOSH)

あ！
あ！
あ！

WOULD YOU MIND LETTIN' GO OF HER?

SHE'S JUST A LITTLE THING. CUT HER SOME SLACK.

WHO THE HELL ARE YOU!?

SHE WAS PICKIN' A FIGHT WITH US!

KEEP YOUR DAMN NOSE OUT OF IT!

LET ME GO!

—THEY'RE ...

GU (YANK)

OWWW!

PIKI ピキ

PIKI ピキッ

SURU (SLIP)

GUIN (YANK)

ピキ PIKI (SNAP)

EEP!?

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

GUI

GUI

LET'S JUST GO HAVE A LITTLE CHAT OVER HERE.

NOW, NOW, NOW.

GUI

YOU JUST...

...LEAVE ALL THE FIGHTIN' TO US.

NIYARI (SMIRK)

NOW, YOU ALL RUN ALONG.

I...I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE, BUT THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

PEKO (BOW)

AH ...

RIKA, DO YOU THINK THOSE MEN ARE ...?

THE WILD DOGS.

I'M SURPRISED. THOSE ARE TAKANO'S MEN.

YES.

WHEN IT COMES TO BRUTALITY, THEY'RE THE BEST OF THE BEST.

THE WILD DOGS. A SECRET FORCE UNDER TAKANO'S DIRECT COMMAND.

...MEANS THEY'VE BEEN ORDERED TO BE MY BODYGUARDS.

AND...

AND THAT MEANS....

...THE FACT THAT THE WILD DOGS HELPED ME...

...TOMITAKE AND TAKANO BELIEVED ME.

This is Heron. Copy.

SHE IS STILL UNDER SURVEIL-LANCE.

THIS IS NIGHTIN-GALE CALLING HERON. R HAS RETURNED TO THE SAFETY ZONE.

HONESTLY KEIICHI-SAN.

THERE WERE SUCH NICE MEN NEARBY?

AREN'T YOU GLAD.

WHEW

WHOEVER IT IS WHO WANTS TO KILL ME WON'T HAVE AN EASY TIME DOING IT.

IF THE WILD DOGS ARE PROTECTING ME, I COULDN'T BE SAFER!

JUST YOU WATCH, HANYU.

RIKA.

IN THIS WORLD, EVERY-THING IS GOING TO WORK OUT!!

CHAPTER 6:
THE FORGOTTEN MAN

...RIKA.

WELL, I'M GOING SHOPPING. I'LL BE BACK SOON...

TAKE CARE, SIR.

THE DAYS PASS PEACE-FULLY.

EVERYTHING IS GOING SMOOTHLY.

THE COTTON DRIFTING IS ONE WEEK AWAY.

GARA (RATTLE)

ガラ

カ+カ+カ+カ+カ+

KANA (CHIRP)

KANA

KANA

EVERY-THING IS GOING SMOOTH-LY...

WHERE IS SATOKO?

SHE SHOULD BE BACK BY NOW.

カチ KACHI (TICK)

カチ KACHI

WHAT?

WHAT... IS THIS FEELING?

ZOKU (CHILL)

WHAT?

ZOKU

EH?

ZOKU

ZOKU

KAGHI (TSUKI)

7

BUT...

...BUT... BUT WHAT IS THIS?

THERE'S NOTHING UNUSUAL ABOUT HER BEING OUT AT THIS HOUR.

SATOKO STAYS OUT LATE WAITING FOR THE EVENING HALF-PRICE SALES ALL THE TIME.

I DON'T KNOW.

THERE'S NO WAY OF KNOWING FOR SURE, BUT...

...I JUST HAD A REALLY BAD FEEL-ING ...!!

TCH!

DOTA (STOMP)

DOTA

WHY ARE THESE THE ONLY TIMES I CAN'T FIND HER!?

SHE'S ALWAYS RIGHT THERE, HOUND-ING ME!

SHIN (SILENCE)

HANYU, ARE YOU THERE!? GO FIND SATOKO !!

BA (JUMP)

I'LL GO TO THE SHOPPING DISTRICT!

SATOKO HAS TO BE THERE!

HAAH!

HAAH!

HAVE YOU...

...SEEN SATOKO AROUND, SIR?

HFF!

HAAH!

WELL, IF IT ISN'T RIKA-CHAMA.

OH?

NO, I HAVEN'T SEEN SATOKO-CHAN.

OH! BUT THE DELICATESSEN ON THE CORNER IS GOING TO SELL ALL THEIR LEFTOVERS AT A DISCOUNT AT THE END OF THE DAY, SO SHE MIGHT BE THERE...

DA CDASHD

RIKA-CHAMA?

OH! RIKA-CHAN.

WHERE?

WHERE ARE YOU!?

SATO-KO...!!

HFF!

HAAH!

YAMABUN IS HAVING A SPECIAL SALE TODAY, SO IF SATOKO-CHAN IS OUT SHOPPING, THEN THAT'S WHERE SHE WOULD BE.

...NO, I HAVEN'T SEEN HER.

R-RENA! UM, HAVE YOU SEEN SATOKO, SIR?

GA (GRAB)

EH?

...EH!?

HAAH!

BUT I WAS JUST AT YAMABUN, AND I DIDN'T SEE HER.

HAAH!

OKAY, LET'S SEE...TODAY THERE WAS A SPECIAL SALE...

AND IN THAT CASE SHE WOULD DEFINITELY BE THERE?

BUT...

...BUT NO ONE SAW HER...?

HFF!

DID SOMETHING HAPPEN TO SATOKO-CHAN?

HFF!

IT CAN'T BE!

NO...

HAAH!

HFF!

RENA ... SATOKO DIDN'T COME H—

RENA WOULDN'T UNDER-STAND!

THAT I SUDDENLY HAD A FEELING THAT SATOKO HAD DISAP-PEARED...?

I CAN'T!

BUN (SHAKE)

BUN (SHAKE)

HA (GASP)

WHAT... SHOULD I SAY?

KANA

KANA

KANA

KANA (CHIRP)

KANA

KANA

—BUT ...

...WHAT'S WRONG, RIKA-CHAN?

I MEAN...

...I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS...

I KNOW.

THAT'S RIGHT.

...THAT THERE ARE WORLDS WHERE ONE DAY, SATOKO SUDDENLY ...

...DISAP-PEARS !!

GOOD-BYE!

DA (DASH)

SU (SSK)

AH! RIKA-CHAN!

NO! IT CAN'T BE!

WORLDS WHERE THAT MAN COMES BACK.

EVERYTHING WAS GOING WELL IN THIS WORLD!

HE CAN'T COME BACK IN THIS WORLD! HE CAN'T!

I'VE BEEN BLESSED WITH SUCH GOOD LUCK IN THIS WORLD! IT CAN'T HAPPEN HERE!

HFF!

HFF!

ZA (ZSH)

THE ODDS OF THAT HAPPENING HAVE ALWAYS BEEN VERY LOW!

HE CAN'T HAVE COME BACK TO THIS HOUSE!

PLEASE, BLESS ME WITH LUCK, JUST ONE MORE TIME!!

YOU'VE BLESSED ME SO FAR.

PLEASE, GOD. PLEASE, I'M BEGGING YOU.

AH...

KACHA KACHAK

PLEASE, GOD...!!

SATOKO...

A RED WELT, WHERE SHE'S BEEN HIT.

EMPTY EYES.

AH-

HEY! SATO-KO!!

HE IS BACK!

...OH.

SU (SSK)

I... I'M TER-RIBLY SORRY.

SFX: BIKU (WINCE)

WHAT'S TAKING SO DAMN LONG !?

GET YOUR ASS IN THERE AND GET THE BATH READY!

IT'S JUST LIKE...

...A YEAR AGO.

TEPPEI HOJO.

DON (DUN)

SATOKO'S VULGAR, ABUSIVE UNCLE.

TEPPEI HOJO...

HURRY THE HELL UP DAMMIT!

BUT THE TWO OF THEM HAVE NO SENSE OF HUMAN LOVE.

THEY CONSTANTLY BULLIED SATOSHI AND SATOKO.

SATOKO LOST HER PARENTS THREE YEARS AGO.

AND SHE AND HER BROTHER SATOSHI WERE TAKEN IN BY THEIR UNCLE, TEPPEI HOJO AND HIS WIFE.

IF TEPPEI HOJO IS BACK ...

TEPPEI EVEN MOVED AWAY TO OKINOMIYA.

THEN LAST YEAR, THEIR AUNT WAS BEATEN TO DEATH AND SATOSHI DISAPPEARED.

IN THOSE DAYS, SATOKO WAS WORN DOWN TO NOTHING, PHYSICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY.

IF SHE STAYS WITH HIM, SATOKO WILL WASTE AWAY AGAIN.

!

RIKA ...?

SA-TOKO.

GUI (TUG)

WE CAN'T STAY HERE. LET'S HURRY AND GO HOME, SIR!

SATO... KO?

UM... RIKA ...

I THINK I'LL START LIVING HERE FROM NOW ON.

MY UNCLE IS BACK.

AND HE WANTS... ME TO LIVE WITH HIM...

WH... WHY!?

YOU WON'T HAVE ANY FUN STAYING WITH YOUR MEAN, OLD UNCLE, SIR!

JUST LOOK AT YOUR CHEEK...

BA- (FWAP)

!

I JUST BUMPED IT, THAT'S ALL.

OH HO HO!

NO.

SHE'S NOT THE SAME SATOKO SHE WAS YESTER-DAY.

IF I STAY WITH YOU, THEN I'LL ONLY CAUSE TROUBLE.

...SO PLEASE, GO HOME.

...HAS IMPRINTED A DEEP FEAR IN SATOKO'S MIND.

THE ABUSE FROM HER AUNT AND UNCLE...

...AND TOOK CONTROL OF SATOKO'S HEART.

TEPPEI AWAKENED THAT FEAR WITH HIS VIOLENCE...

...THE EMO-TIONALLY BEATEN DOWN SATOKO FROM 1982...

THE SATOKO HERE IS THE ONE FROM A YEAR AGO...

HOW COULD THIS HAP-PEN!?

I WORKED FOR A YEAR, TRYING TO HEAL, LOVE, AND MEND HER.

AND I FINALLY GOT SATOKO'S SMILE BACK.

THAT'S WHY...

...WHEN I TAKE HER BY THE HAND...

...SHE WON'T EVEN TRY TO COME WITH ME.

AND NOW, JUST LIKE THAT...

BIKU (WINCE)

SA-TOKO!

GET YOUR ASS IN HERE!

I'M SORRY! I'M SO SORRY!

DA DASH

I TOLD YOU I WANT TO TAKE A BATH, DAMMIT!

KUWA (RAWR)

...THIS MAN HAS DASHED IT TO PIECES.

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?

SATOKO...

TA (TMP)

SATO-KO!!

NOW GO SCRUB THE BATH-TUB!

NOBODY GIVES A DAMN ABOUT YOUR FRIENDS!

N... NOTH-ING. MY FRIEND CAME TO SEE ME.

IF I ARGUE WITH HIM, IT WILL ONLY MAKE THINGS WORSE FOR SATOKO...

GUGUGU (CLENCH)

NITAA (LEEEER)

DAM-MIT!

HERE FOR A PLAY-DATE?

SORRY ABOUT THAT. SATOKO'S A LITTLE BUSY CLEANING THE HOUSE.

...I CAN'T EVEN GIVE HIM A DIRTY LOOK!!

DA (DASH)

NNAH?

WHAT? YOU AFRAID OF MY MUG? WELL, IT IS SCARY ENOUGH TO SHUT UP CRYING BRATS.

GAH HA HA!

GOD IS CRUEL.

TEPPEI HOJO ONLY COMES BACK TO SATOKO WHEN HIS LOVER, RITSUKO MAMIYA, IS KILLED.

THE PROBABILITY OF THAT HAPPENING IS EXTREMELY LOW...

PORO

NO AMOUNT OF EFFORT CAN AFFECT THE ROLL OF THE DIE.

FOR CHANCE TO CREATE A WORLD LIKE THIS—IT'S TOO MUCH!!

PORO (DRIP)

PORO

...WILL WEAR SATOKO THROUGH LIKE AN OLD RAG.

KANA (CHIRP)

KANA

KANA

AT THIS RATE, THIS WORLD...

...WITHOUT SATOKO!

AND I'LL NEVER BE HAPPY...

KANA (CHIRP)

KANA

KANA

IT'S ALL OVER...

SOB

AND NOW IT'S ALL OVER ...!

ZURU

ZURU...

ZZH

SLIDE

...THIS WORLD WAS SO PERFECT ...!!

BAN (BAM)

HAAH

...UNTIL YESTER-DAY...

HEE...

WAIT.

...NO.

I CAN'T GIVE UP YET!!!

DA (DASH)

BUT I HAVE LUCK IN THIS WORLD THAT I'VE NEVER HAD BEFORE.

I'M AS POWER-LESS AS EVER.

KANA
KANA
KANA

OOISHI!
I WANT TO TALK TO AKASAKA. IS HE THERE, SIR?

I never thought I'd get a phone call from you, Furude-san.

Well, well. Hello, hello.

AKASAKA SAID HE WOULD HELP ME.

IF ANYONE CAN SAVE SATOKO, HE CAN!

Akasaka-san?

THAT'S NOT A LOCAL SPRING... WHERE IS IT?

...WAKU-RA?

WAKURA HOT SPRING!

HE'S OUT VISITING A HOT SPRING.

NA HA HA!

He was only stopping by here on his way to and from Noto.

.....
.....EH?

HOW LONG WILL YOU BE HERE, AKASAKA?

BUT HE SAID ...

...I'M SURE THAT'S WHAT HE SAID.

WE PLAN ON STAYING UNTIL THE COTTON DRIFTING FESTIVAL.

I believe he's planning to be back in Hinamizawa just in time for the Cotton Drifting.

—!

Oh.

It's in Ishikawa. On the Noto Peninsula.

...BY "HERE" ...

...HE MEANT, "IN THIS PART OF THE COUNTRY."

OH...

HE WON'T BE BACK IN TOWN FOR A WEEK.

THEN I CAN'T RELY ON AKA-SAKA.

IF GIVEN A WHOLE WEEK...

...THAT MAN WILL CRUSH SATOKO.

BA-
(RUSH)

MAYBE I CAN'T COUNT ON AKASAKA, BUT I HAVE ONE MORE TRICK UP MY SLEEVE!

IT'S ALL RIGHT! IF ANYBODY CAN HELP ME, THEY CAN!!

I KNOW IT!!

THAT'S TERRIBLE NEWS.

THAT TEPPEI HOJO ...?

IRIE AND TAKANO SHOULD BE ABLE TO SAVE SATOKO.

WE TRIED THAT SO MANY TIMES IN OTHER WORLDS!

BUT SATOKO ALWAYS PRETENDS SHE ISN'T BEING ABUSED!

I CAN'T! SATOKO WON'T ASK FOR HELP!

RIKA-CHAN.

SHOULDN'T YOU GO TO THE CHILD CONSULTATION CENTER ABOUT THIS?

!

BUT THERE'S NOT A WHOLE LOT WE CAN DO...

SO THERE'S NO TIME FOR THAT, SIR!

AND SHE BELIEVES THAT IF SHE CAN BE STRONG ENOUGH TO TAKE THE ABUSE, HE'LL COME BACK...!

SHE THINKS IT'S HER FAULT THAT SATOSHI DISAPPEARED A YEAR AGO! SHE THINKS IT'S BECAUSE SHE WAS TOO WEAK!

SATOKO WILL TRY TO ENDURE IT—SHE THINKS IT'S A TRIAL SHE HAS TO GO THROUGH, SIR!

YOU CAN SAVE SATOKO, TAKANO, SIR! PLEASE !!

ARE YOU ASK-ING US ...

SHIN (SILENCE)

...TO TAKE SATOKO'S UNCLE OUT OF THE PICTURE?

...TO USE THE WILD DOGS ...

.....

I DON'T CARE WHAT I HAVE TO DO, JUST AS LONG AS IT WILL SAVE SATOKO!

YES.

IRIE-SENSEI ...!?

LET'S DO WHAT RIKA-CHAN ASKS.

... TAKANO-SAN.

IRIE ...!

I KNOW EXACTLY HOW MUCH SATOKO-CHAN SUFFERED A YEAR AGO.

IF WE DON'T DO SOMETHING, IT WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR HER TO HELP US WITH OUR RESEARCH.

WE CAN'T AFFORD TO LOSE SATOKO-CHAN NOW.

.....

IRIE-SEN-SEI.

...I MEAN, DR. IRIE, SIR.

IF THIS GETS OUT, YOU'LL GET MORE THAN JUST A SLAP ON THE WRIST.

I AM PREPARED FOR THAT.

IRIE!

.....

THIS IS AN AWFULLY HIGH-RISK JOB FOR SO LITTLE PAYOFF.

KOTSU (CLACK)

ALL RIGHT.

I'LL CALL THE WILD DOGS. WAIT HERE.

TAKANO!

PAA (BEAM)

IRIE AND TAKANO LISTENED TO ME!

SATOKO WILL BE SAVED!!

I KNEW THIS WORLD...

...WAS DIFFERENT FROM ALL THE OTHERS—

IT'S NOTHING.

IT'S FOR ME TOO. I WANT TO SAVE SATOKO THIS TIME.

THANK YOU, IRIE, SIR.

KATA (CLATTER)

PATAN (SHUT)

AH.

TAKANO-SAN.

GACHA (KACHAK)

UNFORTU-
NATELY THE
WILD DOGS
CAN'T HELP
US.

...APPAR-
ENTLY
TEPPEI
HOJO'S
MISTRESS,
RITSUKO
MAMIYA, WAS
MURDERED
RECENTLY...

...SO
THE POLICE
HAVE MARKED
TEPPEI HOJO
AS A PERSON
OF INTEREST.

THE WILD
DOGS ARE A
SECRET FORCE
FOR OUR
ORGANIZATION.

WE
CAN'T LET
ANYONE—AND
ESPECIALLY NOT
THE POLICE—
KNOW THAT
THEY EXIST.

...HUH?

GATA
(CLATTER)

WH...
WHY
NOT?

SO NOT EVEN THE WILD DOGS CAN DO ANYTHING TO HELP.

AND RIGHT NOW, WITH TEPPEI HOJO UNDER POLICE SURVEILLANCE, EVEN THE WILD DOGS CAN'T ERASE HIM WITHOUT THEM NOTICING.

...FUFU

GUGUGU (CLLLENCH)

KEIICHI AND THE OTHERS WENT TO THEM IN DOZENS OF OTHER WORLDS.

OR THE CHILD CONSULTATION CENTER.

CALL THE POLICE, FOR EXAMPLE.

I'VE TRIED THAT.

BUT I THINK THE BEST THING WOULD BE TO SOLVE THIS LEGALLY.

I'M SORRY, RIKA-CHAN.

BUT... BUT...

YES.

...I SUPPOSE THE BEST WE CAN DO NOW IS TALK TO THE SCHOOL ...

...IT'S TOO BAD THAT WE CAN'T GO TO THE WILD DOGS, BUT...

I'VE TRIED THAT A MILLION TIMES, AND IT NEVER WORKS !!!!

...EH?

I HAVEN'T ASKED ANY-THING OF YOU!

I JUST LET YOU USE MY BODY FOR RESEARCH WITHOUT ANY COM-PENSA-TION!

SO WHY CAN'T YOU SAVE JUST ONE GIRL!?

YOU HAVE SO MUCH POWER! WHY CAN'T YOU SAVE SATOKO ...!?

WHY CAN'T YOU DO THE SAME THING NOW !!!?

YOU ERASED MY MOTHER !!

RIKA-CHAN, CALM DOWN ...

SU (SSK)

YOU JUST USE ME AND REFUSE TO DO ANY-THING IN RETURN!

YOU WANT ME TO GO TO THE POLICE OR THE GOVERN-MENT— THEY CAN'T DO ANY-THING!

WHAT'S THE POINT IN TRYING?

WHAT'S THE POINT IN FIGHTING DESTINY!?

I STILL CAN'T ESCAPE THIS DESTINY!

A WORLD WHERE SATOKO BREAKS DOWN.

THAT IS THE FATE OF THIS WORLD.

GATA (CLATTER)

I'VE HAD ENOUGH!

BASHI (BASH)

I CAN'T TAKE IT ANY-MORE!

YES, THAT'S RIGHT!

IT'S THE SAME DESTINY ALL OVER AGAIN !!!

I CAN'T BEAT DESTINY !!

BI

GO KILL YOUR-SELF WITH SLEEP-ING PILLS!

BI (JAB)

GO ON AND BURN TO DEATH IN THE MOUN-TAINS!

UWAAA

THERE WILL BE A SMILING SATOKO WAITING FOR ME THERE.

THEN LET'S NOT WASTE ANY TIME...

I CAN'T SAVE SATOKO IN THIS WORLD.

...MOVING ON TO THE NEXT ONE.

IT'S TIME TO GO SEE SATOKO.

NOW.

I'LL DIE.

I'LL DIE AND GO MEET SATOKO IN THE NEXT WORLD...

THERE'S NO POINT LIVING IN A WORLD WITHOUT SATOKO.

THE SATOKO FROM THIS WORLD HAS BEEN TAKEN AWAY BY HER UNCLE. NO ONE CAN SAVE HER.

...I LEAVE BEHIND IN THIS WORLD...?

I THINK I'LL START LIVING HERE FROM NOW ON... WITH MY UNCLE.

...THEN... WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE SATOKO ...

...BUT THEN...

SATOKO
...

SATOKO
...

NGH!

KARAN CLANG

PORO DRIP

PORO

SOB...

SATOKO
...!!

KARA CLATTER

PARA

...
SATOKO
...

KAKUN SLUMP

CHAPTER 7:
A WORLD I'VE SEEN BEFORE

I ALLOWED THIS WORLD TO TURN OUT LIKE THIS.

NGH...

MGH...

SOB

I SHOULD HAVE BEEN MORE CAREFUL! I SHOULD HAVE KEPT SATOKO INSIDE THE HOUSE...

...UNTIL I KNEW WHETHER OR NOT HER UNCLE WOULD COME BACK.

...IT'S MY FAULT.

KHH...

I WAS SO FULL OF MYSELF, THINKING I WAS LUCKY IN THIS WORLD...!

SOB.

PLEASE DON'T BLAME YOURSELF.

Su (SSK)

RIKA...

THE FATE OF THIS WORLD IS MORE FICKLE THAN THE SKY IN AUTUMN.

IT'S FOOLISH TO LET YOUR EMOTIONS BE CONTROLLED BY EVERY CHANGE IN THE WIND, SIR.

...I WAS SO BLESSED IN EVERY-THING.

THIS WAS THE FIRST WORLD WHERE I COULD BE CONFIDENT THAT I'D ROLL A SIX EVEN BEFORE I THREW THE DIE...

AND YOU TELL ME NOT TO GET MY HOPES UP...? IT'S NOT FAIR.

BUT RIKA...

...IF YOU WAIT PATIENTLY, A BLESSED WORLD LIKE THIS ONE IS SURE TO COME AGAIN, SIR.

WE'LL WAIT FOR IT TOGETHER.

...HEY, HANYU ...

...HOW MANY YEARS— HOW MANY DECADES— WILL THAT TAKE?

EH ...?

WELL ...

...IMPOS-SIBLE.

WE CAN ONLY GO BACK ONE OR TWO WEEKS NOW.

AND YOU'RE TELLING ME TO REPEAT THIS ETERNALLY UNTIL I SEE ANOTHER MIRACLE?

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE! YOU'RE ASKING THE IMPOSSIBLE!!

I CAN'T DO IT!

YOUR POWER WILL RUN OUT LONG BEFORE THAT MIRACLE CAN HAPPEN!

HA HA HA.

AH HA HA HA ...

RIKA ...!

NOTHING MATTERS ANY-MORE.

I DON'T HAVE A SINGLE SHRED OF HOPE LEFT.

THIS WORLD, THE NEXT...

...NOTHING MATTERS ANYMORE ...

HA HA HA ...

AH HA HA HA HA HA ...

I'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO BEAT MY DESTINY.

THE NEXT DAY.

十月十一日

ガラ (RATTLE)

SATOKO ...

チラ (GLANCE)

IS HOJO-SAN STAYING HOME TODAY?

FURUDE-SAN, YOU'RE LATE.

OF COURSE SHE'S NOT COMING.

THAT MAN IS KEEPING HER LOCKED UP AT HOME.

WAS I STILL HOPING THAT SATOKO WOULD BE HERE ...?

I REALLY AM A FOOL...

PORO (DRIP)

TO

IS SHE HOME SICK!?

WHERE IS HOJO-SAN TODAY?

IF SOMETHING HAPPENED, PLEASE TELL ME ABOUT IT!

!!!

BA (JUMP)

!

GATA (CLATTER)

KA!!!

RIKA-CHAN!?

SHUT UP.

F... FURUDE-SAN...?

NONE OF THESE PEOPLE CAN SAVE SATOKO.

I'M DONE HERE.

...I'M GOING HOME.

NONE OF THEM COULD SAVE HER IN ANY OF THE OTHER WORLDS.

GUI (TUG)

WAIT, FURUDE-SAN.

TELL SENSEI WHAT HAPPENED.

職員室

SIGN: FACULTY ROOM

HOJO-SAN'S UNCLE ...

I THINK I SEE WHAT YOU MEAN.

THIS IS VERY SERIOUS.

...SO?

NOW THAT YOU KNOW, WHAT CAN YOU DO ABOUT IT?

I CAN PAY THEM A VISIT THIS EVENING.

FIRST, I'LL MEET WITH SATOKO-CHAN AND HEAR HER SIDE OF THE STORY.

IF THERE'S A PROBLEM, THEN I'LL GO TO THE CHILD CONSULTATION CENTER.

.....

GARA (RATTLE)

I'VE SEEN THIS BEFORE TOO.

AFTER SCHOOL.

カナ KANA (CHIRP)

カナ KANA

カナ KANA

ガシ (SCRATCH)

ガシガシ GASHI

KEIICHI AND THE OTHERS FOUND OUT WHAT HAPPENED, AND WE ALL DECIDED TO WAIT FOR CHIE TO COME BACK.

.....

I HAD NO IDEA SATOKO'S UNCLE WAS SUCH BAD NEWS...

DO YOU THINK CHIE-SENSEI WILL BE BACK SOON...?

SHE'S PROBABLY TALKING TO SATOKO NOW.

GARA (RATTLE)

.....! YOU'RE ALL HERE.

SEN-SEI! HOW DID IT GO!?

BA (CROWD)

PINPON (DING-DONG)

IS HOJO-SAN HOME?

PINPON

...WELL...

...UM...

I WOULD LIKE TO SPEAK WITH HER...

IS SATOKO HOJO-SAN HOME?

I'M CHIE, HER TEACHER FROM THE OKINOMIYA BRANCH SCHOOL.

GARA (RATTLE)

WHAT THE HELL DO YOU WANT?

PISHA (SLAM)

KA RAWR!

YOU DAMN MORON!

SATOKO HAS A COLD!

I CAN'T LET HER SEE NO-BODY, DUMBASS!

AFTER THAT, HE WOULDN'T LISTEN TO A WORD I SAID.

I KNEW YOU WOULDN'T GET TO SEE HER.

USELESS WOMAN...

WH- WHAT DID YOU EVEN GO THERE FOR, THEN!?

YOU'RE HER TEACH- ER, AREN'T YOU!?

AND YOU COME BACK ALL "OH, I DIDN'T GET TO SEE HER. OH WELL." WHAT WAS THE POINT IN EVEN GOING!?

GA (GRAB)

WELL, THAT BRUISE IS PROOF THAT SHE'S BEING ABUSED.

HE WON'T LET YOU SEE SATOKO BECAUSE HE DOESN'T WANT YOU TO SEE IT.

SHION, STOP!

THE CHILD CONSULTATION...!? HOW CAN YOU EVEN SUGGEST THAT, SENSEI!?

I REALLY AM SORRY ...

THAT'S WHY I INTEND TO GO TO THE CHILD CONSULTATION CENTER.

THEY WON'T DO ANYTHING WITHOUT PROOF THAT SHE'S BEING ABUSED!

BA (SNATCH)

AS IF YOU DON'T KNOW!

IT WON'T BE EASY TO GET THEM TO BELIEVE US...

...I KNOW. AND THEY ALREADY DON'T TRUST SATOKO BECAUSE OF ALL THE FALSE REPORTS SHE CALLED IN IN THE PAST.

YOU KNOW WHAT HER AUNT AND UNCLE PUT HER THROUGH LAST YEAR!

IF WE DON'T DO SOME-THING, HE'LL DE-STROY HER!

IN OTHER WORDS, WE CAN'T COUNT ON THE CHILD CONSUL-TATION CENTER!

...WE'RE BASI-CALLY SITTING BACK TO WATCH HER DIE!!!

IF WE WAIT UNTIL WE CAN SEE THE ABUSE TO ACT...

OKAY ?

LET'S ALL CALM DOWN! WE CAN THINK ABOUT IT TOGETHER!

DAMMIT! DOESN'T SAVING SOMEONE MEAN DOING IT BEFORE SOME-THING HAPPENS !?

HOW CAN WE SAVE SATOKO !?

WELL, I'VE ALREADY THOUGHT OF SOME-THING.

I'M GOING TO GO...

...AND KILL HER UNCLE.

THEN SOMEBODY GIVE ME A BETTER IDEA!

NO, SHII-CHAN!!

YOU SHOULDN'T EVEN THINK OF SOLVING A PROBLEM WITH MURDER! THAT'S TERRIBLE!

SEE?

YOU HAVE NOTHING!

.....!

STILL, IT'S THE SAME STORY...

...JUST WITH DIFFERENT PEOPLE...

NOTHING WILL CHANGE.

...BUT AT THIS RATE, IT LOOKS LIKE SHION'S GOING TO DO IT.

...NORMALLY, KEIICHI IS THE ONE WHO KILLS TEPPEI.

THAT'S THE ONLY IDEA YOU CAN COME UP WITH BECAUSE YOU'RE ONLY LISTENING TO YOURSELF!!

...NO.

YOU'RE WRONG!

WE'LL ALL THINK TOGETH-ER!

WE'LL ALL WORRY ABOUT IT TOGETH-ER!

THEN I KNOW WE'LL FIND A BETTER WAY THAN YOUR RECKLESS SOLUTION !!

SHUT UP!

KUWA (RAWR)

...IS COUNTING ON ME TO TAKE CARE OF HER.

SATOSHI-KUN...

SATOSHI-KUN'S GONE NOW.

BUT HE ASKED ME TO TAKE CARE OF SATOKO ...!

...THAT'S RIGHT.

... SHII-CHAN ...

I THINK OF HER AS FAMILY !!

SHE'S MORE THAN A FRIEND!

SATOKO ISN'T JUST A PLAY-MATE TO ME!

YOU CAN ALL STAY HERE AND CURSE YOUR OWN POWER-LESS-NESS!

YOU CAN LET HER DIE WHILE YOU STAND AROUND DE-BATING THESE BRILLIANT IDEAS YOU HAVEN'T EVEN COME UP WITH YET!

I'M GOING TO GO KILL HIM.

BA (FWP)

GOOD-BYE!

SHION! RENA SAID YOUR IDEA WAS RECK-LESS.

AND YOU DON'T HAVE HALF A CLUE WHAT SHE MEANT.

ZA (ZSH)

WHAT!? YOU THINK YOU CAN STOP ME!?

DO YOU REALLY THINK KILLING HER UNCLE WILL SAVE SATOKO!?

...KEIICHI...?

SU (SSK)

WAIT.

I'LL DO ANYTHING IF IT WILL MAKE SATOKO HAPPY IN THE END!

IT WON'T!!

I PROM-ISE YOU!

YOU'LL ONLY END UP CURSING YOURSELF, WONDERING WHY YOU RESORTED TO HOMICIDE!

AND SATOKO WILL BLAME HER-SELF FOR DRIVING YOU TO BECOME A MURDERER AND REGRET IT THE REST OF HER LIFE!

FIRST OF ALL, IF YOU TAKE YOUR-SELF OUT OF THE PICTURE BY KILLING A MAN, WHO'S GONNA MAKE SURE SATOKO EATS HER PUMPKIN!?

WHO WILL SATOKO GO TO FOR HELP WITH HER EVIL TRAPS!?

YOU'RE THAT PERSON, SHION SONO-ZAKI!!

...OH REALLY.

SU (SSK)

THAT'S WHY I CAN'T LET YOU GO!

...YOU HAVE TO BE THERE BY HER SIDE!

IF YOU WANT TO MAKE A WORLD WHERE SATOKO CAN BE TRULY HAPPY...

...OKAY, SHION. YOU'RE RIGHT.

AT THIS EXACT MOMENT, I *DON'T* HAVE A BETTER IDEA.

WELL, IF YOU'RE SO SMART, KEI-CHAN, WHAT'S *YOUR* GREAT IDEA FOR SAVING SATOKO?

SO BELIEVE IN YOUR FRIENDS! BELIEVE IN ME!!

AND WE WILL SAVE HER!

BUT WE'LL THINK OF A BETTER WAY TO HELP SATOKO!

STOP IT, SHION!

SHION-SAN!?

GET THE HELL ...

GABA (LUNGE)

SHUT UP!!

DON'T TRY AND STOP ME WITH YOUR IDEAL-ISTIC CRAP!

GA. (WHACK)

BARAN (CLATTER)

!!! WAY OUT...

GARA (CLATTER)

GARA

TSUU (DRIBBLE)

POTA

POTA

POTA (DRIP)

KEI-ICHI-KUN!

KEI-CHAN!

.....HEH.

GOSHI (WIPE)

YOU THINK A LITTLE THING LIKE THAT'S GONNA MAKE ME STEP ASIDE?

...!

WE'LL SAVE SATOKO IN THE BEST WAY POSSI-BLE!!

GUGU (CLENCH)

...BUT!

LISTEN, SHION! YOU CAN KILL ME, BUT I STILL WON'T MOVE!

I WON'T LET SATOKO FACE A WORLD WITHOUT YOU IN IT!

PON (PAT)

VIOLENCE NEVER SOLVES ANYTHING.

!

THAT'S ENOUGH.

SUU SSKA (SSKA)

WE KNOW THEY'RE NOT GONNA HELP US ANY-WAY!!

BUT SIR, WE'VE TALKED TO THE CHILD CONSULTATION CENTER BEFORE...

PRINCIPAL KAIEDA...!

SONO-ZAKI-KUN.

WITH THAT "ANYWAY," YOU'RE ADMITTING DEFEAT BEFORE YOU EVEN FIGHT. IT'S AN UGLY USE OF THE WORD.

I AGREE THAT, IN THIS SITUATION, WE NEED TO CONTACT THE PROPER AUTHORITIES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

.....

...I AGREE WITH PRINCIPAL KAIEDA.

THEY MIGHT NOT HELP US, BUT I THINK WE SHOULD AT LEAST TRY.

I THINK WE SHOULD GO TO THEM FIRST.

IF IT DOESN'T WORK, THEN WE CAN COME UP WITH A PLAN "B" AND A PLAN "C."

WELL THEN, CHIE-SENSEI. LET'S MAKE THE PHONE CALL.

YES, SIR.

GARA (RATTLE)

SU (S.S.K)

SHION ...

YEAH.

WE'RE DOING THE RIGHT THING.

WHEN WILL WE KNOW HOW THINGS WENT?

WE'LL KNOW BY TOMORROW.

OKAY.

.....

KANA (CHIRP)

KANA

KANA

MIIN (BUZZZZ)

MIIN

MIIN

THE NEXT MORNING ...

"WAIT AND SEE" ...?

AFTER OUR CALL YESTERDAY, THE CHILD CONSULTATION CENTER IMMEDIATELY SENT AN OFFICER TO HOJO-SAN'S HOUSE...

...BUT AFTER HE SPOKE WITH SATOKO-CHAN AND HER UNCLE, HE DETERMINED THAT THE SITUATION WAS NOT URGENT.

B-BUT THE OFFICER SAW SATOKO-CHAN'S BRUISES, DIDN'T HE?

!

APPARENTLY SHE TOLD HIM...THEY WERE HER OWN FAULT AND THAT THERE HADN'T BEEN ANY ABUSE.

EVER SINCE SATOSHI DISAPPEARED LAST YEAR, SATOKO'S REGRETTED IT. SHE BLAMES HERSELF FOR RELYING ON HIM TOO MUCH.

WHY ...!?

...TO ATONE FOR WHAT SHE DID A YEAR AGO.

SO SHE THINKS THAT SHE HAS TO ENDURE IT ALONE WITHOUT ANY HELP...

WE'LL HAVE TO THROW IN THE TOWEL.

SATOKO HERSELF WON'T ASK FOR ANY HELP.

SO CHILD SERVICES WAS A BUST.

...ANY-THING WE CAN DO?

ISN'T THERE ...

.....

NO.

WE CAN'T SAVE SATOKO.

I HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO FIGHT THIS DESTINY EVEN ONCE.

NONE OF YOUR STRUGGLES WILL MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE.

MIN

MIN

MIIIN (BUZZZZ)

...BECAUSE THIS WORLD IS NO DIFFERENT THAN ANY OF THE OTHERS.

GIRI (GRIT)

I'M GOING ...

...IF THIS KEEPS UP, 'SHION OR KEIICHI WILL RESORT TO VIOLENCE...

...I'M GOING TO KILL HER UNCLE...!

WE CAN SAVE SATOKO WITHOUT KILLING ANY-BODY!

NI (SMIRK)

FIGHT?

THE FIGHT'S JUST STARTING. YOU NEED TO BE MORE ENTHUSI-ASTIC.

COME ON, WHY ALL THE LONG FACES?

KEIICHI-KUN?

EH?

HOW WILL THIS BE ANY DIF-FERENT? HOW?

MAKE AN APPEAL? BUT WE ALREADY TALKED TO THEM.

WE'RE GOING TO MAKE AN APPEAL TO THE CHILD CONSULTATION CENTER.

WE ALL AGREE THAT'S A BAD IDEA, RIGHT?

BUT THEY DECIDED TO "WAIT AND SEE."

WE WANT THEM TO TAKE SATOKO INTO CUSTODY.

I'VE LIVED MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED YEARS.

AND I'VE NEVER HEARD THOSE WORDS BEFORE.

BAN! (BAM!)

SO WE'LL ALL GO AND GET THAT DECISION OVER-TURNED !!!

THE MORNING AFTER THE CHILD CONSULTATION CENTER DECIDED TO "WAIT AND SEE" ABOUT SATOKO...

GU (CLENCH)

SO WE'LL ALL GO AND GET THAT DECISION OVERTURNED !!

(BUZZZZZ)

MIN

MIN

THE KEIICHI IN THIS WORLD IS DEFINITELY DIFFERENT...

...BUT...

KEIICHI SAID SOMETHING I HAD NEVER HEARD BEFORE.

CHAPTER 8: KEIICHI'S IDEA

...I STILL ...

...SINCERELY BELIEVE THAT HE CAN DEFEAT THIS DESTINY.

...ABOUT HOW SATOKO WAS TREATED LAST YEAR, RIGHT?

SEN-SEI.

YOU EXPLAINED TO THEM IN DETAIL...

SFX: KOKUN (NOD)

THAT'S RIGHT, MION.

SHE'S ONLY MISSED SCHOOL ONCE. IT'S NOT ENOUGH TO GET THEM TO TAKE US SERIOUSLY.

KEI-CHAN, THEY DON'T THINK IT'S WORTH MAKING A BIG DEAL ABOUT.

YES ... BUT ...

...DIFFERENCE IN DETERMINATION...?

SO BASICALLY ...

...OUR ENEMY IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OUR DETERMINATION AND THE CHILD CONSULTATION CENTER'S!

I GET IT, KEI-CHAN!

IF WE DON'T THINK THAT THE CHILD CONSULTATION PEOPLE REALLY UNDERSTAND SATOKO'S SITUATION, THEN...

HA! (GASP!)

!

!!

IN PER-SON!

...BETWEEN SATOKO AND HER UNCLE!!!

EXACTLY!

WE JUST HAVE TO GO AND EXPLAIN TO THEM THAT THINGS ARE ALREADY BAD...

OH NO.

ACTUALLY, I TALKED TO MY PARENTS ABOUT IT LAST NIGHT.

YOU'RE AMAZING, KEIICHI-KUN!

HUH?

AND THEY SAID ...

YOU'RE RIGHT! IT'S SO OBVIOUS WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT...

I WANT YOU TO THINK, KEIICHI.

DAD?

SIGN: MAEBARA

DO YOU THINK IT'S RIGHT TO KILL SOME-ONE...

...FOR THE SAKE OF YOUR OWN JUSTICE?

NO, OF COURSE NOT.

THAT'S RIGHT. IN THIS WORLD, IF SOMEONE BREAKS THE RULES AND KILLS ANOTHER, WHATEVER THE REASON...

...NO ONE WILL BE WILLING TO HELP THEM, MUCH LESS PRAISE THEM.

SO YOU NEED TO WIN BY PLAYING BY THE RULES!

...AND THAT'S WHY WE'RE ALL GOING TO GO EXPLAIN ABOUT SATOKO-CHAN.

YEAH.

Y'KNOW. PARENTS ARE THE GROWN-UPS CLOSEST TO YOU, RIGHT?

SO I SUCKED IT UP AND TOLD THEM ALL ABOUT IT.

AND THAT'S WHAT THEY TOLD ME. THE ONLY WAY IS TO JUST KEEP FILING COMPLAINTS, ONE AFTER ANOTHER.

...BUT I DON'T KNOW.

I HEARD IT'S NOT SO EASY TO OVERTURN AN OFFICIAL ASSESSMENT ONCE IT'S BEEN MADE.

YOU CAN APPEAL ALL YOU WANT— IT WON'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE.

TSUKA (SCUFF)

SHION.

TSUKA

WE ARE MEMBERS OF THE STRONGEST CLUB THERE IS! WE DON'T GIVE UP BEFORE WE EVEN TRY!

WE DO EVERY-THING IN OUR POWER TO WIN !!

.....

!!

PA (YANK)

PLEASE, ...! LET GO OF ME!

MAEBARA-KUN, I'M GLAD YOU'RE THINKING THIS THROUGH.

TO BE HONEST, I WAS AFRAID YOU'D SUGGEST ATTACKING HIM IN HIS SLEEP.

EH?

...THE TRUTH IS, I THOUGHT WE SHOULD WAIT AND SEE TOO.

BUT AFTER HEARING YOU ALL TALK IT OVER, I UNDERSTAND YOUR SENSE OF URGENCY.

I WASN'T ABLE TO HELP, BUT SOMETIMES APPEALS CAN CHANGE MINDS.

EVEN AT THE CHILD CONSULTATION CENTER!

SENSE!
...

AHA. SHE HIT THE NAIL ON THE HEAD.

!?

WH-WH-WH-WHO'S CURLED UP IN A BALL!?

INSTEAD OF CURLING UP INTO A BALL AND AGONIZING OVER THIS BY YOURSELF, WHY DON'T YOU FIGHT WITH US?

WELL, SHII-CHAN?

GUGUGU (GRIT)

GATA (CLATTER)

YOU'RE SO RUDE!

.....!

THAT'S THE SPIRIT!

IF THE GOAL IS TO WIN THE CENTER OVER TO OUR SIDE, I'LL PRETEND TO CRY, I'LL FLATTER THEM SHAMELESSLY... I'LL DO WHATEVER IT TAKES!!

ZA (ZSH)

SO LET'S GO, THEN! TO THE CHILD CONSULTATION CENTER!

...IT'S STRANGE.

WOW, YOU'RE PREPARED

DOES EVERYBODY KNOW WHERE THE CHILD CONSULTATION CENTER IS?

BASA (RUSTLE)

LET'S GO RIGHT AFTER CLASS

EVERYONE WAS SO DISCON-NECTED BEFORE.

I'VE DEALT WITH A LOT OF OFFICIALS AS PART OF THE TOWN COUNCIL.

YOU REALLY KNOW YOUR STUFF, MION.

KEIICHI IS BRINGING THEM ALL TOGETHER.

WHATEVER YOU DO, STAND YOUR GROUND WHEN NEGO-TIATING WITH THE OFFICIALS.

GOT IT?

...I'VE DECIDED NOT TO GET MY HOPES UP ANYMORE.

IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT WE DO. IT'S HOPELESS ANYWAY.

BUT...

YOU'RE COMING TOO, RIKA-CHAN?

RIKA-CHAMA! YOU CALL YOUR-SELF SATOKO'S BEST FRIEND?

AND YOU'RE NOT EVEN GOING TO TRY TO HELP?

.....!

STOP IT, SHII-CHAN.

BA (FWP)

ばっ

HUH? WHY WOULD I THINK OF SATOKO AS MY ARCH-NEMESIS?

TO THINK I'D EVER HEAR YOU LECTURE ME ABOUT SATOKO.

AND YOU USED TO THINK OF HER AS YOUR ARCH-NEMESIS.

YOU TOO, RIKA-CHAN.

RIGHT NOW IT'S TIME TO JOIN FORCES TO SAVE SATOKO-CHAN.

IF WE ALL WORK TOGETHER, WE'RE SURE TO MAKE A MIRACLE HAPPEN...!

...RENA.

...I FEEL LIKE SOMEONE TOLD ME THAT A LONG, LONG TIME AGO ...

...WHEN I WAS AGONIZING OVER MY PROBLEMS, ALL ON MY OWN.

BUT...

...WHAT IF THERE IS NO MIRACLE?

IF WE COMBINE OUR EFFORTS, THEN THERE'S NO MIRACLE WE CAN'T MAKE HAPPEN!

THE ONLY REASON THERE WOULDN'T BE A MIRACLE IS IF WE AREN'T REALLY ALL WORKING TOGETHER.

SO WORK WITH US...

...RIKA-CHAN.

I DON'T WANT ...

...TO GET MY HOPES UP AND HAVE THEM CRUSHED AGAIN.

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU...

SHE'S RIGHT, RIKA-CHAN.

SU (SSK)

MION?

SIGNS (L): WE OPPOSE THE HINAMIZAWA DAM

YOU'RE A HINAMIZAWA NATIVE, SO I WON'T LET YOU TELL ME YOU'VE FORGOTTEN.

ZUI (ZOOM)

ONCE ...

...HINAMIZAWA WAS DOOMED TO END UP ON THE WRONG SIDE OF A DAM AT THE BOTTOM OF A LAKE.

BUT TWO THOUSAND PEOPLE BANDED TOGETHER TO PROTECT THE VILLAGE!

AND WE TORE THAT DESTINY DOWN !!!

NI (GRIND)

BUT THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE ...

KOTSU (CLACK)

...?

TORE DOWN ...

...DESTINY.

...IT WILL BE RIKA-CHAMA'S FAULT FOR NOT HELPING US!

IF THERE ISN'T A MIRACLE ...

...SHION.

WE CAN MAKE A MIRACLE HAPPEN?

IF I BELIEVE, THERE WILL BE A MIRACLE?

THAT'S WHY WE'RE ALL WORKING TOGETHER!

SO STUPID.

RIKA-CHAN.

YOU'LL NEVER COME UP WITH ANYTHING IF YOU AGONIZE OVER IT BY YOURSELF.

AND TALKING IT OVER TOGETHER!

...YOU COULD NEVER TEAR DOWN...

PEOPLE LIKE YOU...

DON'T GIVE IN...

...TO DES-TINY!

DON'T FORGET IT!!!

BA-CBAM!

FOR YOUR INFOR-MATION, DESTINY ...

...IS AS THIN AND BREAKABLE AS A GOLDFISH SCOOPER!

KEIICHI...

TOKUN (THROB)

I'VE BEEN TRAPPED INSIDE THIS DESTINY FOR A HUNDRED YEARS.

TOKUN

AND OF ALL THINGS ...

TOKUN

TOKUN

...YOU TELL ME IT'S AS WEAK AS A GOLDFISH SCOOPER !!?

DOKUN THUMP

KUSU (CHUCKLE)

NO ONE IS BETTER THAN KEIICHI AT WINNING PEOPLE OVER TO HIS CAUSE.

THAT MUST BE WHY I'VE BEEN ABLE TO SPEND A HUNDRED YEARS WITH HIM AND NEVER GET TIRED OF IT.

KUSU KUSU?

...I LIKE IT, KEIICHI.

LET'S GO.

TO THE CHILD CONSUL-TATION CENTER ...!

I'M GLAD TO HEAR THAT, RIKA-CHAN!

...I BELIEVE IN YOU.

KEIICHI...

YEAH!

ALL RIGHT, GUYS! LET'S DO THIS THING!

SO SHOW ME.

SHOW ME YOUR FIGHT TO BEAT DESTINY ...!!

AND... AFTER SCHOOL

OKINO-MIYA

カナ KANA (CHIRP)

カナ KANA

カナ KANA

WHO WOULD'VE GUESSED IT'D BE ON THE FIRST FLOOR OF THE LIBRARY.

SO THIS IS THE CHILD CONSULTATION CENTER...!

ZAWA

ZAWA

ZAWA (MURMUR)

ZAWA

MAEBARA-SAMA. THANK YOU FOR WAITING.

YOU CAN GO IN NOW.

AH! COMING!

...JUST YOU WAIT, SATOKO.

WE'RE GOING TO LET THEM KNOW JUST HOW BAD YOUR SITUATION IS.

AND WE WILL GET YOU OUT OF IT!

相談室

SIGN: CONSULTATION ROOM

GACHA (KACHAK)

EXCUSE US.

SO YOU ARE... SATOKO HOJO-SAN'S CLASS-MATES.

AND WHAT ARE YOU HERE TO DISCUSS TODAY?

EXPLAIN, YOU SAY?

SATOKO'S UNCLE IS A VIOLENT MAN.

IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE HE HURTS HER BADLY !!

AND WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT ?

PERA (FLIP)

OKAY... HERE GOES!

IT'S ABOUT THE DECISION TO WAIT AND SEE HOW SATOKO HOJO'S SITUATION DEVELOPS.

WE THINK THAT YOUR OFFICER DID NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND THE CIRCUM-STANCES, AND SO WE'VE COME TO EXPLAIN.

THE FACT IS, SATOKO WAS ABUSED BY HER AUNT AND UNCLE A YEAR AGO.

SO WE WANT YOU TO SAVE HER BEFORE IT HAPPENS AGAIN...!

PERA

...WE ARE CURRENTLY HANDLING THE SITUATION WITH HOJO-SAN.

.....

PERA

PERA

I UNDER-STAND. HOW-EVER ...

CUR-RENTLY HAN-DLING ...?

YOU MEAN TAKING YOUR SWEET TIME EXAMIN-ING THE PROB-LEM?

YOU MEAN THE "WAIT AND SEE" DECISION?

ZUI (ZOOM)

IF HE DOES ABUSE SATOKO, WHO'S GOING TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THOSE INJURIES!?

IF YOU'RE GOING TO WATCH AND WAIT, YOU'LL END UP WATCHING HER DIE.

BUT YOUR OFFICER WENT HOME YESTERDAY WITHOUT DOING ANYTHING.

NO, WE DO NOT INTEND TO WATCH HER DIE.

THEY ARE NOT FATHER AND DAUGH-TER!

UNCLE AND NIECE!

I CANNOT TELL YOU ANY MORE THAN THAT AS IT WOULD BE A VIOLATION OF THEIR PRIVACY ...

...BUT WE INTEND TO GIVE THE HOJO FAMILY GUID-ANCE SO THAT FATHER AND DAUGHTER CAN LIVE A WHOLE-SOME LIFE TOGETHER.

YESTERDAY, WE SENT AN OFFICER DIRECTLY TO THEM TO ASSESS THE SITUATION.

...
PARDON ME.

UNCLE AND NIECE, YOU SAY. I'LL REVISE THAT.

SHE'S ACTUALLY LISTEN-ING TO US.

イラ
IRA (IRK)

BUT IT LOOKS LIKE THAT'S ALL SHE'S DOING.

DO YOU REALLY THINK YOU UNDER-STAND THE PROB-LEM!?

KANA (CHIRP)

KANA

KANA

WE'RE BEGGING YOU, PLEASE UNDERSTAND OUR SENSE OF URGENCY ...!

...YES, AND AS I TOLD YOU BEFORE, WE ARE CURRENTLY HANDLING THE SITUATION WITH THE UTMOST CARE.

...WE TOLD HER EVERYTHING WE COULD ABOUT SATOKO...

WELL THEN, I WILL INFORM THE CHILD WELFARE OFFICER THAT FIVE OF SATOKO-SAN'S FRIENDS HAVE MADE AN APPEAL ON HER BEHALF.

GATA (CLATTER)

WHAT THE HELL!? HANDLING IT? WHAT DO YOU MEAN, HANDLING IT!?

YOUR VIEWS ARE IMPORTANT TO US. THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR SPEAKING WITH ME TODAY.

BUT I SERIOUSLY DOUBT THAT OUR APPEAL GOT THROUGH TO HER.

KANA (CHIRP)

KANA

KANA

KII

KII (CREAK)

AFTER THAT, NONE OF US COULD BRING OUR-SELVES TO GO HOME.

SO WE STAYED IN OKINO-MIYA.

ON THE OTHER HAND, IT'S NOT LIKE SHE WAS MEAN TO US.

...I'M SURE SHE ONLY TALKED TO US THAT WAY BECAUSE SHE'S JUST THE CONTACT, AND SHE'S NOT DIRECTLY IN CHARGE OF SATOKO-CHAN'S CASE.

I FEEL LIKE SHE JUST BRUSHED US OFF.

WHAT'S YOUR OPINION, MION?

SHE REFUSED TO BUDGE ONE WAY OR THE OTHER.

I FELT LIKE WE WERE SUMO WRES-TLING A BIG TREE.

WHAT DO YOU THINK, RENA?

...I WON'T SAY IT WAS A WASTE OF TIME, BUT I DON'T THINK THAT THE PERSON WHO'S REALLY IN CHARGE OF THE CASE WILL UNDERSTAND HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO US.

.....
...YEAH.

BUT I DO THINK HE'LL GET THE MESSAGE THAT FIVE OF SATOKO HOJO'S FRIENDS CAME THIS EVENING TO MAKE AN APPEAL TO HAVE HER TAKEN INTO CUSTODY.

I KNOW THAT OUR ENEMY IS THE DIFFERENCE IN FERVOR BETWEEN US AND THE CHILD CONSULTATION CENTER.

I ANNOUNCED TO EVERYONE THAT WE WOULD SAVE SATOKO.

BUT WE CAN'T EXPECT THAT TO WORK OUT.

CHIE-SENSEI IS MAKING AN APPEAL TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION RIGHT NOW.

BUT...

...IN THE END, WE COULDN'T DO ANYTHING.

.....

...SO...

...WHAT DO WE DO NEXT ...?

KANA (CHIRP)
カ+
KANA
カ+
KANA
カ+
KANA
カ+
KANA
カ+
KANA
カ+

...
KEIICHI.

...I'M SORRY. AFTER ALL MY BIG TALK.

WE'RE OUT OF OPTIONS.

RIKA-CHAN.

I DON'T BELIEVE IT.

...AND I BELIEVED IN THOSE WORDS.

...TO BELIEVE IN YOU...

...YESTERDAY, YOU TOLD SHION ...

EH?

...I DON'T BELIEVE IT. I DON'T BELIEVE YOU'RE TELLING ME WE'RE OUT OF OPTIONS.

AND SO...

SO PLEASE... HELP HER...

YOU SAID DESTINY IS AS THIN AND EASY TO BREAK AS A GOLDFISH SCOOPER.

...RIKA-CHAN...

SAVE SATOKO... FROM HER DESTINY ...!

BECAUSE YOU'RE SOMEONE WHO CAN TEAR DOWN DESTINY.

AND I BE-LIEVED YOU.

I STILL BELIEVE YOU.

PORO (DRIP)

DAMMIT, DAMMIT, DAMMIT...!

DAM-MIT!

SO THEY'RE ALL STAKING THEIR HOPE ON ME.

AND BELIEVING IN ME MEANS TAKING A CHANCE ON ME.

THOSE WORDS REALLY ARE HEAVY ONES.

SHE'S RIGHT ...

...AND DIDN'T EVEN REALIZE IT UNTIL I MADE HER PAY WITH HER TEARS.

AND HERE I HURT RIKA-CHAN'S FEELINGS ...

SOB.

SNIFF.

I TOLD THEM TO BELIEVE IN ME!

カナカナカナ
KANA (CHIRP) KANA KANA

ポン
PON (PAT)

THANKS, RIKA-CHAN.

YOU LIT THE SPARK FOR ME, RIKA-CHAN.

AND STARTED ME ON FIRE.

...OKAY, GUYS...

...THIS IS WHERE WE GET MAD AS HELL!

НА! (ФАБР!)

!!

!!

WE WENT TO THEM AND TOLD THEM SATOKO'S SITUATION IS URGENT!

AND THEY TREATED US LIKE DIRT!

THIS IS NO TIME TO BE MOPING AROUND THE PLAY-GROUND!

KEI-CHAN...

.....

I FELT SO EMPTY BEFORE, BUT NOW MY CHEST IS BURNING...!

...HEH. THIS IS INTER-ESTING.

AND RENA'S THE TYPE WHOSE FIGHTING SPIRIT BLAZES QUIETLY AT THE LAST MINUTE.

SHION'S JUST LIKE HER.

MION GETS MORE POWERFUL WITH MORE WIND AT HER BACK.

...IS STILL SMOL-DERING NOW...

AND IF THEIR SPIRIT ...

...THEN KEIICHI MAEBARA WILL FAN THOSE SPARKS INTO A BIGGER BONFIRE THAN WE'VE EVER SEEN!!

GU (CLENCH)

WE'RE GONNA KEEP FIGHT-ING!!

BA (FWP)

!

IF THEY WON'T GO DOWN IN ONE BLOW, THEN WE JUST HAVE TO KEEP STRIKING!!

AM I RIGHT, GUYS !!?

KANA (CHIRP)

KANA

KANA

KANA

CLOSE, BUT THAT'S A LITTLE TOO SOFT.

HEH HEH HEH.

...ARE YOU SAYING WE COME BACK TOMORROW?

...OKAY, KEIICHI-KUN. THEN WHAT DO WE DO NEXT?

HEH HEH HEH.

REMEMBER WHAT THE COUNSELOR LADY SAID?

"I WILL INFORM THE CHILD WELFARE OFFICER THAT FIVE OF SATOKO-SAN'S FRIENDS HAVE MADE AN APPEAL ON HER BEHALF."

SO WHAT IF NEXT TIME IT'S NOT FIVE?

NOT FIVE...?

KEI-CHAN.

I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE PLOTTING, BUT I'M STARTING TO THINK IT'S GOING TO BE INTERESTING.

ZA (ZSH)

BESIDES ...

MION?

HEH!

HEH HEH.

YOU'RE RIGHT.

NI (SMIRK)

!=?!

...A LITTLE HEAD-WIND LIKE THIS...

WE'LL FIGHT...

...AND WE'LL WIN!!

...WE JUST HAVE TO TURN IT RIGHT BACK AROUND!

THE FIRE'S LIT...

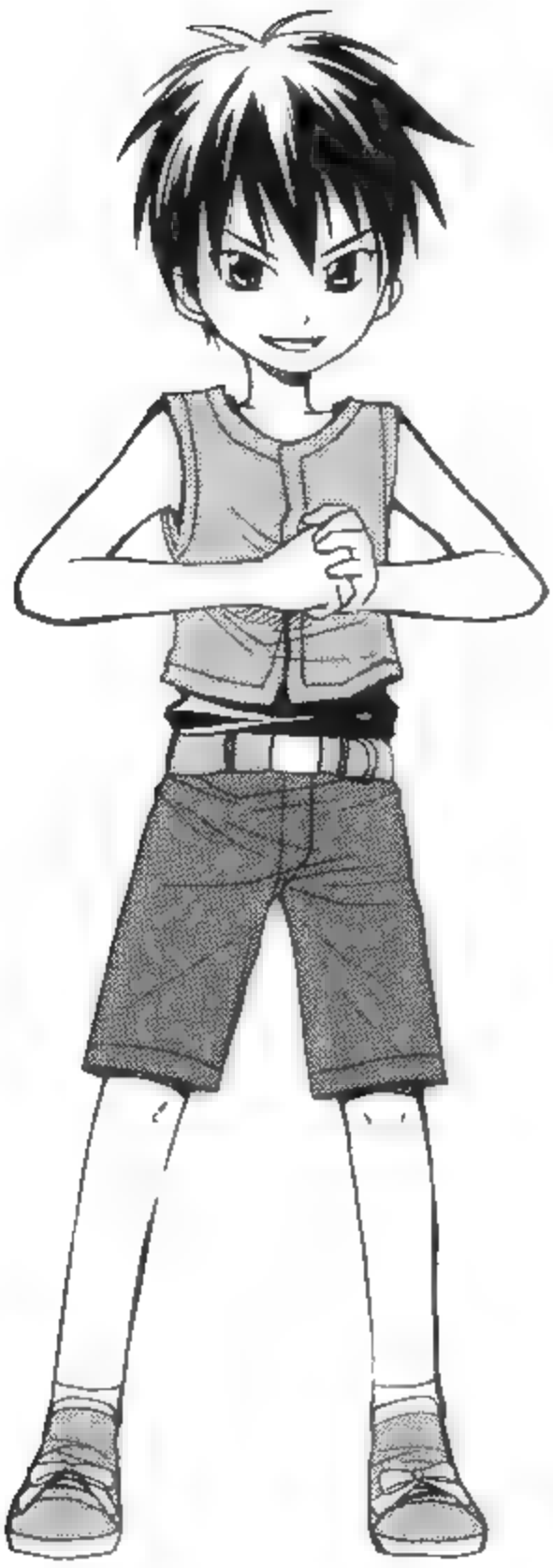
GOOD!

WE'LL KEEP FIGHTING UNTIL SATOKO IS SAVED!

THERE'S NO STOPPING US NOW!

NOW.

WE BEGIN THE COUNTER-ATTACK!



UNFORTU-
NATELY, WE
DIDN'T GET
THROUGH
TO THEM
AT ALL.

...JUST
HOW BAD
SATOKO'S
SITUATION
IS.

YESTERDAY,
WE WENT
TO THE
CHILD CON-
SULTATION
CENTER TO
LET THEM
KNOW...

MIIIN

MIN

(BUZZ)

BUT WE
WILL
KEEP
FIGHT-
ING...

YEAH.

IT'S ALL
YOU, KEI-
CHAN.

...UNTIL WE SAVE SATOKO FROM TEPPEI HOJO!!

ZA (ZSH)

CHAPTER 9: HINAMIZAWA SPIRIT

SORRY TO INTERRUPT YOU WHILE YOU'RE EATING!

BUT I WANT YOU ALL TO LISTEN UP!!

ZAWA (MURMUR)

WHAT?

EH?

ZAWA

YOU ALL KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON WITH SATOKO HOJO RIGHT NOW, DON'T YOU!?

ZAWA

WHAT'S GOING ON, MAEBARA-SAN?

HER UNCLE TOOK HER AWAY THREE DAYS AGO...

...AND SHE HASN'T BEEN TO SCHOOL SINCE!

I KNEW IT.

...BUT...

KATA (CLATTER)

KACHA (KACHAK)

I KNEW IT. THEY'RE ALL CONCERNED ABOUT SATOKO.

ESPECIALLY THE ONES WHO SAW HER LAST YEAR, HOW SHE WAS LIKE A WALKING CORPSE.

.....

BUT NOBODY KNOWS WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT.

IN THAT CASE, WE'LL TEACH THEM HOW TO FIGHT!!

THEY SAY HER UNCLE CALLED AND SAID SHE'S GOT A COLD!

BUT WE KNOW THAT'S BULL!

THE CLINIC DOESN'T HAVE ANY RECORDS OF HER COMING IN FOR A CHECKUP!

THINK ABOUT IT! ALL OF YOU!

BLUH (PFFT)

OH HO HO!

THAT'S OKAY!

THESE DUMPLINGS ARE GOING BAD

SATOKO DOESN'T KNOW THE MEANING OF THE WORD "SICKLY"! DOES IT MAKE ANY SENSE FOR HER TO SUDDENLY BE BEDRIDDEN FOR THREE DAYS?

N...NO, IT DOESN'T.

AND MOST PEOPLE DON'T STAY HOME FOR THREE DAYS BECAUSE OF A COLD...

THEY MIGHT STAY HOME THAT LONG FOR THE FLU.

BUT THEN SHE'D HAVE TO GO TO THE CLINIC, RIGHT?

ZAWA (MURMUR)

ZAWA

ZAWA

THAT IS KINDA WEIRD.

YEAH ...

!!?

ZAWA (MURMUR)

EVERY-ONE.

THE TRUTH IS THAT SATOKO IS BEING ABUSED.

SU (SS)

OH NO...!

IS HOJO-SAN OKAY!?

HAVE YOU SEEN HER, MAEBARA-SAN!?

AS OF TWO DAYS AGO, THEY SAY THAT SATOKO DIDN'T HAVE ANY EXTERNAL INJURIES.

KASA (RUSTLE)

THERE'S EVEN A REPORT AT THE CHILD CONSULTA-TION CENTER THAT SAYS SO.

NO. I HAVEN'T.

BUT EVEN IF HER UNCLE HASN'T HIT HER YET...

BAN (BAM)

...ACCORDING TO THIS PAMPHLET FROM THE CHILD CONSULTATION CENTER...

...IF HE'S NOT LETTING HER GO TO SCHOOL, THAT'S CHILD ABUSE!

PAMPHLET: BY MAKING THE CHILD.. / REFUSING THE CHILD'S RIGHT TO ATTEND SCHOOL

THAT'S ABUSE IF I EVER HEARD IT!

FURTHER-MORE, HER UNCLE WENT TO LIVE WITH HIS LOVER AND ABANDONED SATOKO FOR A YEAR!

PAMPHLET: NEGLECT AND ABANDONMENT

...RIKA-CHAN SAW SATOKO OUT DRYING THE LAUNDRY THE OTHER DAY.

IN OTHER WORDS, HE'S KEEPING SATOKO LOCKED UP AT HOME...

...TO MAKE HER DO ALL HIS HOUSE-WORK!

GUSHA (CRUMPLE)

CAN YOU CALL SOME-ONE LIKE THAT A PARENT!?

CAN YOU SAY THAT THIS IS NOT CHILD ABUSE!!?

N...NO! HE'S NOT A PARENT!

THAT'S OBVIOUSLY CHILD ABUSE!!

AND YET!

CHILD SERVICES FLA-GRANTLY IGNORED THESE THREE FACTS!

THEY SAID THEY WANT TO MAKE THEIR DECISIONS CAREFULLY! AND THEY TELL US THEY'RE HANDLING THE SITUATION BY WAITING TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS!!

DO YOU THINK THEY'RE HANDLING IT RIGHT !!?

NO! THEY'RE NOT!!

...IS THE CHILD CONSULTATION CENTER.

OF ALL THE PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS OUT THERE, THE ONLY ONE THAT CAN TAKE HER INTO CUSTODY BEFORE SHE GETS HURT...

!

SU (SSK)

POS

CAN WE ALL SIT BACK AND LET SATOKO DIE JUST SO WE HAVE PROOF A CRIME HAS BEEN COMMITTED!?

THE POLICE CAN'T HELP UNTIL A CRIME IS COMMITTED!

GATA (CLATTER)

GATA

YOU KNOW US BETTER THAN THAT!

WE'VE ALL STUDIED TOGETHER, PLAYED TOGETHER, AND SOMETIMES FOUGHT WITH EACH OTHER AT THIS SCHOOL.

OUR BOND IS AS STRONG AS IF WE WERE FAMILY ...

SHE'S A DEAR, DEAR FRIEND!

BAN (BANG)

WE...

...CAN'T STAND BY AND LET OUR FRIEND DIE!!!

WELL SAID, GUYS!!

I LIKE THE LOOKS ON THOSE FACES!

NOW LISTEN UP. OUR CLUB HAS ALREADY GOTTEN THE BALL ROLLING!

WE MADE AN ATTACK ON THE CHILD CONSULTATION CENTER JUST YESTERDAY!!

...EH?

GU CCLENCH

GU

GU

FIVE CLASS-MATES... AREN'T ENOUGH ...

AND THEY RECORDED THE FACT THAT "FIVE OF SATOKO HOJO'S CLASSMATES MADE AN APPEAL ON HER BEHALF."

DO YOU KNOW WHAT I'M GETTING AT?

LET'S SHOW THEM OUR HINAMI-ZAWA BRANCH SCHOOL SPIRIT!!!

I'LL TAKE ALL THE HITS!

ALL OF YOU! HELP US SAVE YOUR FRIEND!

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS WATCH MY BACK!

THE FIGHT WILL BE EASY!

GARA (RATTLE)

M-MAEBARA-KUN! WHAT IS GOING ON IN HERE!?

YEAAAH!

SU (SSK)

STOP THIS RIGHT NOW!

YOU'RE ASKING ALL OF THESE YOUNG CHILDREN TO FIGHT FOR YOU!?

FURUDE-SAN...?

RIKA-CHAN...

EVERYONE IS DOING THEIR BEST TO HELP SATOKO, SIR.

...CHIE.

I CAN'T DO ANYTHING WITHOUT EVERYONE'S HELP.

I'M SO POWER-LESS.

...BUT...

...I CAN PREVENT YOU FROM TRYING TO STOP US...!!!

17°

PON (PAT)

...WHAT EXACTLY IS IT YOU NEED TO STOP SO BADLY?

... BUT ...

NIKO (SMILE)

THEY'RE ALL STRONGER THAN WE THINK.

YOU HAVE NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT.

DON (DUN)

MAEBARA-KUN! DO WHAT YOU CAN!

IF ANYTHING HAPPENS, YOU CAN HOLD YOUR PRINCIPAL KAIEDA RESPONSIBLE!

BA LOOM

.....! PRINCIPAL KAIEDA!

PRINCIPAL KAIEDA...

WA (BEAM)

FUU (SIGH)

...THEN I'LL GO WITH YOU.

EVERYONE, WE'LL FIGHT THIS BATTLE ACCORDING TO THE RULES!

UNDER-STAND?

RAAAH!

YES, MA'AM !!!

THANK YOU BOTH, SIRS...!

RAAAH!

ALL RIGHT, EXCEL-LENT!

WE'RE ON FIRE!!

ざわ

ZAWA (MURMUR)

ざわ

ZAWA

LET THE SECOND WAVE OF THE ATTACK BEGIN...!!

か

KANA (CHIRP)

+

か

+

KANA

か

+

KANA...

UM...HOW MANY OF YOU ARE THERE?

HOW ARE YOU ALL RELATED TO...?

ZA (ZSH)

WE'RE ALL OF SATOKO'S CLASS-MATES...

...AND HER TEACHER. THAT'S SEVENTEEN OF US.

SU (SSK)

THEN PREPARE A LARGER ROOM, PLEASE.

SO IF YOU WOULD BE SO KIND AS TO APPOINT ONE OF YOU TO GO IN AS A REPRESEN-TATIVE...

THE CONSUL-TATION ROOMS AREN'T THAT BIG.

INSTEAD OF MAKING US CONFORM TO THE SIZE OF THE ROOM ...

...I THINK YOU SHOULD CHOOSE A ROOM THAT WILL ACCOMMODATE US.

THAT DOESN'T SOUND LIKE A COMPLIMENT.

KOSO (WHISPER)

THAT THREAT WAS TIMED PERFECTLY.

YOU'RE GOOD, RENA-SAN.

ORÓ

UM... ER... PLEASE WAIT.

ORÓ (FLUSTER)

SIGN: CONFERENCE ROOM

会議室

MAYBE IT WAS RENA'S THREAT, BUT WE RECEIVED A MUCH DIFFERENT RECEPTION THAN THE ONE WE GOT YESTERDAY.

THEY LED US INTO THEIR BIG CONFER-ENCE ROOM, AND WE MET WITH THE CENTER'S CHIEF OFFICER.

PEKO (BOW)

I AM KEIICHI MAEBARA, SPEAKING FOR ALL OF US.

PARA (FLIP)

WE HEARD YOUR VALUABLE OPINION IN REGARD TO SATOKO HOJO-SAN YESTERDAY.

DO YOU HAVE SOME-THING ELSE TO SPEAK ABOUT TODAY?

THANK YOU ALL FOR COMING ...

I AM HARAYAMA, THE CHIEF OF WELFARE.

FIRST, I WOULD LIKE YOU TO CONFIRM THAT YOU UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING WE TOLD YOU YESTERDAY.

THEN I'LL START BY PROVING THAT THERE IS ONE!

I KNEW IT.

THEY DON'T SEE ANY PROBLEMS WITH WHAT THEY'RE DOING.

AND I BELIEVE THAT YOU WERE TOLD THAT WE ARE HANDLING THE SITUATION.

...IS YOUR HANDLING OF THE SITUATION BASED ON THE KNOWLEDGE THAT HER UNCLE ABUSED HER A YEAR AGO?

.....

ピク (TWITCH)

...I AM AWARE THAT YOU MADE AN APPEAL STATING THAT SATOKO HOJO-SAN'S SITUATION IS BAD ENOUGH...

PERA (FLIP)

...THAT YOU WANT US TO TAKE HER INTO CUSTODY, AND YOU FEEL WE SHOULD DEAL WITH THE MATTER QUICKLY.

I HADN'T HEARD THAT.

WE HAVE NO CONFIRMED REPORTS OF ANY ABUSE FROM HER UNCLE.

HUH ...!?

WHY NOT !?

ZAWA

WHY ...!?

ZAWA

ZAWA (MURMUR)

SO WHAT WERE YOU DOING LAST YEAR !?

HER AUNT AND UNCLE WERE BOTH BEATING HER!

WE ONLY HAVE EVIDENCE OF THE AUNT'S ABUSE.

WE WERE NEVER AWARE THAT THE UNCLE WAS INVOLVED.

DON'T GET MAD. KEEP YOUR COOL, KEIICHI MAE-BARA!

NOW YOU KNOW THAT THEY DIDN'T FULLY UNDER-STAND THE SITUA-TION!

VERY WELL.

WE WILL CONDUCT A NEW INVESTIGATION ON MR. TEPPEI.

KOKUN (NOD)

SARA (SCRIBBLE)

SARA

NOW ALL YOU HAVE TO DO...IS ATTACK !!

THEN WE ARE HERE BECAUSE WE WANT TO MAKE SURE YOUR UNDERSTANDING IS CORRECT!

WHAT IS THE CENTER'S OPINION ON THAT?

SATOKO'S UNCLE WENT TO LIVE WITH HIS MISTRESS IN OKINOMIYA AND ABANDONED SATOKO FOR A YEAR.

I HADN'T HEARD THAT EITHER.

.....!

!!!

MR. TEPPEI WAS FORCED TO LEAVE HOME FOR WORK IN ORDER TO SUPPORT SATOKO-SAN.

...THAT IS THE EXPLA-NATION I RECEIVED.

JUST HOW FAR OFF THE MARK IS THEIR INFORMA-TION!?

Y...YOU BELIEVE THAT OBVIOUS LIE!?

GU CLENCH GU GU

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THAT!?

SINCE YOU HAVEN'T HEARD THIS BEFORE, THEN WE HAVE MORE TO SAY. SATOKO IS SUPPOSEDLY SICK ENOUGH TO HAVE BEEN IN BED FOR THREE DAYS, BUT THERE'S NO RECORD OF HER GOING TO THE CLINIC!

...I SEE.

PERA (FLIP)

...SHE RESPONDED THAT THERE IS NO ABUSE AND SAID THAT SHE WOULD LIKE TO CONTINUE LIVING WITH HER UNCLE.

BUT WHEN I ASKED SATOKO-SAN HERSELF...

...YOU DECIDE THERE'S NO ABUSE !!?

SO IF SHE SAYS THERE'S NO ABUSE ...

AND SO—

IT'S IMPORTANT TO CONSIDER WHETHER OR NOT THE PERSON IN QUESTION CONSIDERS THE TREATMENT TO BE ABUSE.

THAT IS WHAT MAKES THIS SO DIFFICULT ...

...YOU WON'T HELP HER?

IN OTHER WORDS, UNLESS SATOKO-CHAN ASKS FOR HELP HERSELF...

SHE DENIES THAT SHE IS BEING ABUSED.

AND SHE IS BEING PROVIDED WITH AT LEAST A MINIMUM OF THE NECESSITIES— FOOD, CLOTHING, AND SHELTER.

SO WE CANNOT DENY MR. TEPPEI GUARDIANSHIP.

...I'M TERRIBLY SORRY, BUT...

NO.

THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT.

WE BELIEVE THAT SHE IS NOT CURRENTLY IN ANY SERIOUS DANGER.

...IS IT POSSIBLE THAT YOUR CLAIMS OF ABUSE...

...ARE A BIT OF AN OVER-REACTION?

...WHAT...

YEAH! YEAH!

HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT!?

...THE HELL!!?

SHE CAN'T ASK FOR HELP HER-SELF!

SO WE CAME TO DO IT IN HER STEAD!

YOU BAS-TARDS!

SATOKO'S UNCLE HAS HER LOCKED IN THE HOUSE— SHE CAN'T GO OUTSIDE OR USE THE PHONE!!!

GATA CLATTER

AND YOU'RE TELLING US WE'RE OVER-REACTING!?

.....

ALL WE'RE SAYING IS THAT WE WANT TO TREAT THE SITUATION MORE DELICATELY.

PLEASE, CALM DOWN.

PLEASE, TRY TO WATCH OVER THEM KINDLY AS THEY START THEIR NEW LIFE TOGETHER...

MR. TEPPEI HAS STATED THAT, AS HER ONLY RELATIVE, HE WILL PROVIDE HER WITH THE LOVE SHE NEEDS.

AND WE BELIEVE THAT IT IS BEST FOR A CHILD TO BE RAISED BY A LOVING PARENT.

...RENA...

DAN CWHAM

GIN (GLARE)

NO, NOT AT ALL.

WHAT WE'RE SAYING IS THAT WE NEED TO DO A MORE THOROUGH INVESTIGATION...

...TO DETERMINE HOW URGENT IT IS THAT WE TAKE SATOKO-SAN INTO CUSTODY.

...IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE TELLING US?

IN OTHER WORDS, YOU WON'T LISTEN TO ANYTHING WE SAY.

JUST SAY THAT YOU CAN'T HELP SATOKO RIGHT NOW!
"INVES-TIGATE," MY ASS.

IF WE DON'T HURRY, SHE'LL FALL APART ...!!
WE ONLY HAVE A SMALL WINDOW OF TIME TO RESCUE SATOKO!

WHY...?
DAMMIT!

WHY IS WHAT THEY THINK...

...SO DIFFERENT FROM WHAT WE KNOW !!!?

KANA (CHIRP)
KANA
KANA
KANA
KANA
KANA

...IN THE END...

...WE STILL COULDN'T GET THEM TO SEE THINGS OUR WAY.

TOBO (TRUDGE)
TOBO

WE HAD OUR WHOLE CLASS COME, AND IT STILL DIDN'T WORK...

IT'S TRUE THAT OUR MESSAGE DIDN'T GET THROUGH TO THE CHILD CONSULTATION CENTER...

I WOULDN'T SAY THAT.

EH?

WE HAVE TO KEEP TRYING TO HELP HOJO-SAN!

WAI

THAT GUY'S REALLY BAD NEWS...!

I DIDN'T THINK THE CENTER WOULD BE SO CLUE-LESS!

WAI (CLAMOR)

WAI

AH...

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME FOR THEM.

THEY'VE NEVER ALL BANDED TOGETHER TO FIGHT FOR A FRIEND BEFORE.

IT KIND OF REMINDS ME OF THE DAM WAR.

.....

WOW.

SO WHAT WE DID TODAY WASN'T A TOTAL WASTE...

IF ONE THROWS STONES, TWO THROW BACK.

IF A THOUSAND, THE WHOLE VILLAGE STANDS AGAINST THEM.

IF TWO, THEN FOUR.

IF FOUR, THEN EIGHT.

OH, IT'S SOMETHING ONI-BABA TOLD US A LONG, LONG TIME AGO.

IT MEANS THE WHOLE VILLAGE NEEDS TO BAND TOGETHER AND FIGHT.

WHAT'S THAT? A PROV-ERB?

CHIE-SENSEI.

THAT'S NOT ALL IT MEANS.

ITS REAL MEANING IS THAT WE ALL FIGHT FOR EACH OTHER AS IF FIGHTING FOR OURSELVES.

IT MEANS WE ALL SHARE THE PAIN OF ONE.

THAT MEANS THAT WE'RE FIGHTING THE HINAMIZAWA WAY.

THEN THAT SAYING CARRIES A LOT OF WEIGHT FOR US RIGHT NOW.

OHHH!

ARE WE ALL GOING TO STORM THE CHILD CONSULTATION CENTER AGAIN TOMORROW, SIR?

...WE PROBABLY WON'T GET THEM TO CHANGE THEIR RECEPTION, LIKE THE WAY THEY HAD TO GIVE US A NEW CONFERENCE ROOM TODAY.

BUT IF WE GO WITH THE SAME GROUP WE HAD TODAY ...

THEY SAY THERE'S POWER IN PERSIS-TENCE!

OF COURSE!

RIGHT.

IF EVERY-ONE TALKS TO THEIR FRIENDS, WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO GET OUR NUMBERS UP TO ABOUT FORTY.

SO MAYBE WE JUST NEED TO BRING MORE PEOPLE! MAYBE!

...IS THERE ANY CHANCE AT ALL OF GETTING MORE THAN JUST KIDS IN THE RANKS?

..... HEY...

.....

...THE ELDERLY ARE ALL COLD TO SATOKO TOO, SIR.

THERE ARE A LOT OF PEOPLE IN THE TOWN COUNCIL THAT DON'T WANT TO HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE HOJOS.

.....HMMM.

BUT EVEN IF WE CAN ONLY GET FORTY, THAT'S AMAZING, SIR.

IT'S SO STUPID.

SATOKO DIDN'T DO ANYTHING!

...AN AFTER-EFFECT OF THE DAM WAR... PEOPLE FROM HINAMIZAWA AREN'T SUPPOSED TO FRATERNIZE WITH THE HOJO FAMILY.

.....EH?

YOU REALLY THINK THAT WILL BE ENOUGH?

NIYA (SMIRK)

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, RIKA-CHAN?

ANGEL MORT

Angel Mort

ZAWA

ZAWA (MURMUR)

BY THE WAY, WHERE'S SHII-CHAN?

OH.

SHE'S TALKING TO THE WAIT-RESSES.

OH, RIGHT. SHE WORKS HERE.

...WHY ARE WE MEETING KAMEDA-KUN, THE KOUSHIEN PITCHER, HERE?

HEH HEH.

NO IDEA.

AND ...

...YOU CAN COUNT ON ME, K.

LEAVE ANY BASE-BALL TEAM-RELATED STUFF TO ME.

AND THAT'S THE STORY, KAMEDA-KUN.

CAN I GET YOU TO BRING AS MANY FRIENDS AS YOU CAN TO THE CHILD CONSULTATION CENTER TOMORROW?

YEAH !!

HEY, GUYS!

YOU HEARD 'IM!

DON (DUN)

ZA (ZSH)

Yikes

...WHA—!?

...OKAY.

JUST SAY THE WORD, COMRADE K!

WE CAN'T FORGIVE ANYONE WHO WOULD LOCK UP A REAL-LIFE GIRL!

OF COURSE NOT!

Y... YOU DON'T MIND?

GIMME ALL YOU GOT, AND LET'S GO GET 'EM!

YOUR LIVES ARE IN MY HANDS!

KAY-AY!

KAY-AY!

KAY-AY!

あ

あ

あ

RRRAAAH!

KAY-AY!

THE CONSULTATION CENTER IS IN FOR A SURPRISE.

NOW WE SHOULD GET AT LEAST SIXTY, EASY.

KAY-AY!

WOW...ALL THE COLORFUL CHARACTERS FROM ANGEL MORT...

KEIICHI-KUN IS POPULAR IN THE MOST UNEXPECTED PLACES.

RAAH!

あ

...IS THE POWER TO TEAR DOWN DESTINY ...

...THIS ...

THAT EVENING, THE COTTON DRIFTING FESTIVAL COMMITTEE HAD A MEETING.

THEY EXPLAINED TO ME HOW THE REVERSE AUCTION IS GOING TO WORK.

SINCE I'M STILL A MINOR, I WENT WITH MY DAD.

EH?

I HEARD ABOUT WHAT YOU'RE PLANNING TOMORROW EVENING.

SU (SSK)

MAE-BARA-SAN.

OH, COACH.

THANK YOU SO MUCH!

!

TAKANO-SAN AND TOMITAKE-SAN SAY THEY'LL BE GOING TO CHEER US ON TOO.

I'LL BE GOING TOO WITH ALL MY AVAILABLE STAFF.

EH?

THIS WAS TAKANO-SAN'S IDEA.

RIKA-CHAN.

TAKANO ...

WE WEREN'T ABLE TO HELP THE OTHER DAY.

IT'S THE LEAST WE COULD DO.

AND THAT CONCLUDES OUR MEETING.

PAN

PAN (CLAP)

ZORO

ZORO

ZORO (MARCH)

KARA (RATTLE)

...WELL, DAD'S GOING OUT DRINKING.

IS MION DONE YET...?

WHAT IS SHE DOING?

YOU'LL LOVE OUR LOCAL SAKÉ

MAN, I CAN'T WAIT.

TSUKA (STRIDE)

TSUKA

WHY HELLO, AND THANKS FOR YOUR HARD WORK.

I WANTED TO COME UP WITH A GAME PLAN FOR TO-MORROW ...

IF YOU'RE WAITING FOR MION-SAN, YOU'LL BE WAITING A LONG TIME.

THE REFRESHMENT COMMITTEE HAS GOTTEN INTO A BIT OF A SCUFFLE.

EH? A SCUFFLE? BUT A FESTIVAL'S SUPPOSED TO BE FUN.

GOSO (RUMMAGE)

OOISHI-SAN...

IT'S NO EASY TASK TO WORK OUT THE DETAILS FOR THE REFRESHMENT STANDS.

SHUBO (FWSH)

OF COURSE.

SIGNS: SHAVED ICE

SIGNS: YAKISOBA

SO THEY HAVE TO WORK OUT ALL THE DETAILS TO MAKE SURE WE HAVE A WIDE SELECTION.

...THEN THE ONLY THINGS TO EAT WILL BE YAKISOBA AND SHAVED ICE. THAT'S NO FUN.

IF EVERY-ONE GOES WITH THE POPULAR CHOICES ...

SIGN: YAKISOBA - ¥500

THE NEGOTIATIONS THAT GO ON UNDER THE SURFACE ARE THE PRECIOUS OIL THAT KEEPS THE WORLD RUNNING SMOOTHLY.

EVERY-THING IN LIFE TAKES FINE-TUNING.

I GUESS A LOT OF WORK GOES ON BEHIND THE SCENES.

I HAD NO IDEA.

URK.

YOU THINK SO...?

BUT THE ONLY WAY WE CAN FIGHT IS TO SPEAK UP.

...ARE A KIND OF UNDER-THE-SURFACE NEGOTIA-TION.

IN A SENSE, MAEBARA-SAN, YOUR PETITIONS TO THE CHILD CON-SULTATION CENTER ...

SEEING AS HOW TEPPEI-SAN AND SATOKO-SAN, THE TWO PEOPLE CONCERNED, DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT IT.

NIKO (SMILE)

NO, NO. YOU'RE DOING A FINE THING.

HA HA HA ...

AH-HA HA HA! あっはっは

IF I WERE YOUR AGE, I WOULD'VE ATTACKED TEPPEI-SAN IN HIS SLEEP.

SHUBO (FWSH)

GOSO (RUMMAGE)

...I'LL BE GOING NOW, SINCE IT LOOKS LIKE I WON'T BE TALKING TO MION ANY TIME SOON.

OO-ISHI-SAN...

PEKO (BOW)

SEE YOU LATER.

GUSHI (SCRUNCH)

GUSHI

BY THE WAY, MAEBARA-SAN...

...I'D LIKE TO GIVE YOU SOME FOOD FOR THOUGHT.

WH-

WHAT?

?

BUT THEY HAVE NO IDEA WHAT KIND OF DANGER SHE'S IN.

YOU'VE TOLD THE CHILD CON-SULTA-TION CENTER HOW YOU FEEL.

SO I PERSONALLY THINK THAT YOU'VE DONE ENOUGH.

IF WE TRY A THIRD DAY IN A ROW, WE SHOULD SEE SOME RESULTS.

な～はっは NA~HA HA!

THIRD TIME'S THE CHARM, HUH?

...THEN WE'LL KEEP PUSHING AND PUSHING UNTIL SATOKO IS SAFE.

IF THE ONLY WAY TO GET THROUGH TO THEM IS TO MAKE A HUGE DEAL OUT OF IT ...

WHY IS HE SAYING THIS ALL OF A SUDDEN?

WHAT'S WRONG WITH OOISHI-SAN?

BUT IT SOUNDS LIKE HE'S TRYING TO TELL US TO STOP GOING...

WE CAN'T POSSIBLY HAVE DONE ENOUGH.

OUR APPEALS AREN'T GETTING THROUGH TO CHILD SERVICES AT ALL.

MAE-BARA-SAN...

JARI (CRUNCH)

HA GASP

SAA (WHOOSH)

IT CAN'T BE...

HAVE YOU EVER HEARD THE SAYING, "POKE AT THE BUSH, AND YOU'LL SCARE OUT A SNAKE"?

NIII! (SMIRK)

IN OTHER WORDS, "LET SLEEPING DOGS LIE."

ZOKU (CHILL)

IS THAT A WARNING?

IS HE TELLING US TO STOP!?

HIGURASHI WHEN THEY CRY MASSACRE ARC 1 END

©Ryukishi07/Kyoto Animation/Higurashi When They Cry

ABOUT THE "MASSACRE ARC": THE HEROINE IN THE SHADOW

ORIGINAL STORY, SUPERVISOR: RYUKISHI07

HELLO, I'M RYUKISHI07.

AS THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE BEEN READING *HIGURASHI WHEN THEY CRY* FROM THE BEGINNING PROBABLY KNOW, THE HIDDEN MAIN CHARACTER OF THESE STORIES IS RIKA FURUDE. RIKA FURUDE IS SPECIAL—SHE COMMANDS A VIEW OF THE ENTIRE STORY—AND THEREFORE, SHE IS AN IMPORTANT CHARACTER WHOSE POSITION IS MOST SIMILAR TO THAT OF ALL OF YOU READERS.

HOWEVER, WHEN WRITING THE SERIES, I WANTED TO MAKE IT SO YOU WEREN'T AWARE OF HER IMPORTANCE UNTIL VERY LATE IN THE STORY. I WAS FACED WITH A PREDICAMENT BECAUSE I DIDN'T WANT HER TO STAND OUT TOO MUCH UNTIL THEN. AS A RESULT, IN THE OPENING STORY, KEIICHI, RENA, AND MION ALL RUN AROUND HAVING FUN WHILE RIKA-CHAN JUST STANDS BEHIND THEM, BEAMING, AND SHE ENDS UP FADING INTO THE BACKGROUND.

ON THE OTHER HAND, BECAUSE OF THAT, WHEN SHE OCCASIONALLY COMES OUT AND DOES OR SAYS SOMETHING MYSTERIOUS, THE IMPRESSION SHE LEAVES IS THAT MUCH DEEPER.

I SUPPOSE THAT WHEN SOMEONE WHO IS USUALLY QUIET FINALLY MUTTERS SOMETHING, IT HOLDS THAT MUCH MORE MEANING.

I THINK THAT THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE WHO ACT QUIET AND ALOOF AT SCHOOL BECAUSE THEY WANT TO BE THAT TYPE OF CHARACTER, BUT THOSE PEOPLE DON'T COMMUNICATE ENOUGH. THAT TYPE OF BEHAVIOR WILL LEAD TO A REPETITION OF THE MISTAKES IN THE "ABDUCTED BY DEMONS ARC."

RIKA IS MOST CERTAINLY NOT A "QUIET" CHARACTER. SHE PLAYS AND LAUGHS WITH EVERYONE, AND THEN WHEN THE SITUATION CALLS FOR IT, SHE SAYS SOMETHING VERY SIGNIFICANT.

AS FOR MYSELF, MY INTENT IS TO USUALLY SAY THINGS THAT ARE SILLY AND POINTLESS, AND THEN OCCASIONALLY SAY SOMETHING REALLY COOL, BUT NO ONE TAKES IT SERIOUSLY. HMM, SO IF YOUR CONDUCT ISN'T RIGHT, THEN IT DOESN'T MATTER WHEN YOU SAY SOMETHING GOOD (SWEAT).

I want to do my best so that I can draw Rika-chan as she continues to grow with the help of her friends.

♥Special x2 Thanks♥

Original Story, Supervisor:
Ryukishi-sama, BT-sama
Editors: Nakagawa-sama, Koizumi-sama
My assistants: Iida-sama, Ono-sama, Ekuni-kun, Kusaka-sama, Satou-sama, Shouno-sama, Tsukiyo-sama, Neko x3-san, Hamada-sama, Hime-sama, Matsunaga-sama, Yamagata-sama, Yuuka-sama, I-chan

& everyone in my family & You♥♥

I can't sleep with my feet facing Tokyo...

Volume Two is finally out! The worst type of world came up again, and now Rika and the others have started their fight to save Satoko. Without weapons. It's a *Higurashi* first! They've all done some growing through all the tragedies of the past.

À la *Umineko*

WILL KEI-ICHI...

...WILL RIKA...

...BE ABLE TO SAVE SATO-KO!?

MY...

MY UNCLE...

MY UNCLE...

...AND THE THIRD APPEAL...

YOU NEED TO REACH OUT TOO!

SO, SATOKO-CHAN!

...THE HAND REACHED OUT TO RESCUE SATOKO...

OOISHI'S WARNING...

HIC...

I DON'T UNDERSTAND, SATOKO!!!

PORO (DRIP)

HIGURASHI
WHEN THEY CRY
MASSACRE ARC ①

RYUKISHI07
Hinase Momoyama

Translation: Alethea Nibley and Athena Nibley

Lettering: AndWorld Design

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

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